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Jeff Porcaro

Rayford Griffin

Poison's Rikki Rockett

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FEATURES



Photo by Jaeger Kotos

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Splitting his time between Toto and studio work, Jeff Porcaro has experienced the pros and cons of both working for himself and for others. He discusses the reasons behind his decreasing use of electronics, and shares a particularly bad experience he once had on a studio session with a well-known artist.

by Robyn Flans

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Best known for his seven years with fusion violinist Jean-Luc Ponty, Rayford Griffin has also worked with such artists as Stanley Clarke, Patrice Rushen, and Cameo. He discusses his background, and explains why he feels that a lot of music that's labeled "fusion" isn't *true* fusion.

by William F. Miller



Photo by Sharon Sipple

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Drumming with the band Poison demands a combination of musicianship and visual excitement. Rikki Rockett describes his role in the group, and reveals the process by which he comes up with his drum parts for the group's songs.

by Mary Ann Bachemin and Mark Konrad

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It wasn't that long ago that drumset was not considered a valid instrument in college music programs. But thanks to schools such as the **University of Miami**, the **Berklee College of Music**, and the **University of North Texas**, students can now pursue music degrees with a drumset major. MD visited these schools for a look at three different approaches to music education.

*by William F. Miller, Rick Van Horn,
and Lauren Vogel*

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Maintaining Perspective

Modern Drummer has never ignored the significance of electronics and its application to drumming, and we've done our best to bring you the latest information on the subject. I've commented on the importance of keeping abreast of technology on more than one occasion in this column.

We've actually been covering the electronic scene since the days of *Star* and *Syndrum* in 1979. In 1983 we were the first major publication to present a full report on drum machines. And we've continued to cover the new technology through departments like *Electronic Review*, *The Machine Shop*, *Electronic Insights*, and *MIDI Corner*, each created to help you deal with important aspects of this complex area.

All of this is well and good. However, I believe a danger exists when a special-interest music magazine gives the impression that technology should take precedence over the goal of becoming the best *player* you can be. We've tried to keep our priorities in perspective over the years, and have deliberately avoided putting too great an emphasis on technology, over and above musicianship.

Our primary purpose is to help you play the instrument to the best of your ability. We accomplish that by presenting the concepts of the leading artists of the day—artists who willingly share their ideas with you. We also help by supplying insight on important techniques, and by offering practical solutions to problems all drummers en-

counter, whether they be in the concert arena or on the local club bandstand. Publishing information that will aid you in attaining your goals as a player is what we do. Much to our satisfaction, the overwhelming majority of *MD* readers seem to be in agreement with that editorial premise.

The point is, technology in and of itself won't necessarily make you a *better* player if you haven't devoted the time and effort needed to become one. There's certainly nothing wrong with exploring new areas. But keep in mind that most of the artists who've broken new ground with electronics did so only after proving themselves as extremely competent players first. Bill Bruford, Dave Weckl, Terry Bozzio, Chad Wackerman, and Peter Erskine are a few who immediately come to mind, and who clearly demonstrate the point. The technology was the icing on the cake for these skilled players—the upper floor after the foundation was firmly set. Again, it's simply a matter of keeping things in proper perspective.

Unfortunately, it's pretty easy to have one's priorities distorted, in light of today's hi-tech environment. Over-emphasizing the technological aspect tends to make us lose sight of the reasons we got involved with drums in the first place—which was to *play music*, and to play it to the best of our ability. That's what *Modern Drummer* is all about. And in the final analysis, isn't that what *all* this is really about?

RS

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JOEY KRAMER

Thanks for giving a cover to an excellent drummer and wonderful person: Joey Kramer [August '88 *MD*]. He is a man who has proved to us all that you can overcome anything if you try. Joey has both excellent technique and a wonderful visual side, and displays both on stage with Aerosmith.

You not only gave readers Joey Kramer, but also a wonderful insight into the world of drum corps. If it were not for college, I would join many a friend on the field. Once again, thank you for such a wonderful issue. And by the way, the new format looks great!

E. Vogt
Lexington KY

I can't tell you how impressed I was by your handling of the subject of substance abuse in the Joey Kramer interview. As a recovering alcoholic myself, everything in my life—especially my playing—changed when I took charge of my life. Kudos to Saccone and Kramer for their candor.

Thanks, also, for your thoughtful inclusion of my name in your *Update* department "News" section. I was thrilled to be mentioned in the midst of such distinguished company. I must say that I never thought I'd see my name in your magazine, by virtue of the fact that I still have much to learn about my craft. *MD* is certainly a good tool at my disposal.

Malcolm Travis
Boston MA

LIBERTY AND CARLOS

I'd like to extend my appreciation to Rick Van Horn and Robyn Flans for two excellent interviews in the July issue of *Modern Drummer* with Liberty DeVitto and Carlos Vega. I was fascinated to hear Liberty's story about life on the road (especially in the

Soviet Union) with Billy Joel. The chart section, entitled "Liberty: Off The Record," was great to have. I only wish every cover drummer's interview included a similar section.

Even more, I enjoyed the superb interview with Carlos Vega. His classic "rags to riches" story from banging on frying pans with spoons to performing for 50,000 people with James Taylor should be an inspiration to us all. I see Carlos as a very inspiring, up-and-coming musician whom I'm sure we'll soon hear more and more about.

In closing, I must say that the July issue as a whole was probably the best example in recent issues of the fine journalism that makes up your publication. Keep up the good writing!

Jonathan Burton
Damariscotta ME

DCI CORRECTION

We would like to thank you for the review of Dave Weckl's *Contemporary Drummer* + *One* audio cassette/book package [On *Tape*, August '88 *MD*]. We'd like to mention that the price of \$26.95 listed in the review was the original price, which also appeared in the first few ads. Due to the unanticipated length of the transcription book and charts, the price has been changed to \$29.95. The early ads were placed before the package was complete, due to lead time necessary for magazine advertising.

In the fall we will be releasing the same material in a molded plastic storage case. This case will also be available separately to people who already have the material.

Paul Siegel
DCI Music Videos, Inc.
New York NY

VIKTOR MIKHALIN AND MORE

I am writing to express my heartfelt thanks to *MD* for doing such a marvelous job of supplying the drumming community with a wealth of knowledge month after month, year after year. I read the interview with Russian drummer Viktor Mikhailin [August '88 *MD*] and was moved to tears by his genuine enthusiasm for American musicians. Yes, music is a universal language, and drummers are at the core of it.

I also want to thank you for acknowledging drummers, like myself, who are incarcerated, but who still take their drumming very seriously. In places like these, *Modern Drummer* is a godsend. To the other readers of *MD*: Even though we may differ at times in our opinions, let's remember that *Modern Drummer* is, and always will be, the only true magazine for us and about us. Let's be mindful not to use it to say things that might be hurtful or offensive to one another.

Thomas Maynard
Walkkill NY

KUDOS TO CORDER

Recently, after much thought and careful consideration, I decided to purchase a drumset from the Corder Drum Company, located in Huntsville, Alabama. When my drums arrived, I quickly noticed the fine workmanship that went into making my set—in addition to their beautiful sound.

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Bob Owen
Asheville NC

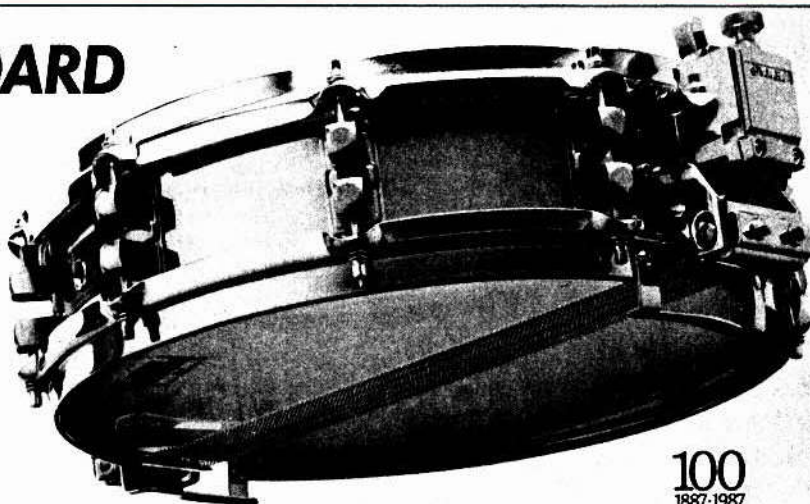


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Chris Frantz



When Talking Heads drummer Chris Frantz got a call from Virgin Records some months ago asking him to take over the task of producing reggae artist Ziggy Marley's *Conscious Party* album, Frantz didn't quite know what to do. "The call came as a result of an unfortunate incident," Frantz said. "My good friend Alex Sadkin was supposed to produce the album, but he had just been killed in a car accident in Jamaica. I didn't know how Ziggy felt about the proposition. I mean, he chose Alex to produce the record, not me."

As it turned out, Marley was very receptive to the idea, so, in time, Frantz and fellow Head/wife Tina Weymouth were in the studio with Marley and the Melody Makers, Ziggy's sibling backup group, working on tracks to this year's most successful reggae album. "It turned out to be a pretty good record," Frantz continued. "I'm glad I was asked to get involved."

Frantz has another project he's proud of, too: *Naked*, Talking Heads' latest LP. It features some of Frantz's finest moments as a drummer. "I really turned things around when we went into the studio to record the album," Frantz said. "I deliberately went after a different drum sound because I had it up to my eyebrows with the 'big' rock beat."

Instead of pounding away,

Frantz used brushes rather than sticks for all but one song, "Ruby Dear." "I love the texture that you get when you use brushes," Frantz said. "I wanted a more organic drum sound. The only way I knew how to get it for certain was to use brushes."

Frantz incorporated other stylistic turn-arounds on *Naked*. "In the past, I always seemed to use the hi-hat quite a bit. So this time I didn't. In fact, most of the drum parts on the album are different than what I

would have played in the past. They're simple and straightforward. I was able to do pretty much what I wanted and get away with it."

On top of all this, Frantz and Weymouth have completed a brand new Tom Tom Club LP called *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom*, which, Frantz said, "is the kind of drum sound you'll hear on the record." The album features a 50/50 split of acoustic drums and drum machines, Frantz explained. "Because the Tom Tom Club isn't a band project, I found it easier to experiment, especially with the drum machine. The album starts off on pretty familiar terrain, but then we move into some pretty weird stuff." For one song, "The Challenge Of The Love Warriors," Frantz sampled human breathing and triggered it so that "the whole thing sounds like a big orgy. There's lots of rhythmic huffing and puffing going on."

According to Frantz, the Tom Tom club used to be "something to do on the side." But since David Byrne has no plans to promote *Naked* by taking Talking Heads on tour, "the Tom Tom Club will probably become a more important project to me," Frantz said. "I can't very well make a Talking Heads album and then sit around for the next year or so," he continued. "There's got to be a bit more to my career, don't you think?"

Indeed.

—Robert Santelli

Gina Schock



On House of Schock's first record, Gina Schock split the drum duties with drummer Steven Fisher. "Initially I was going to play drums on all the songs, but then I decided that Steven should participate because he's going to be playing most of these songs when we play live," Gina says. "I found him through my partner Vance [DeGeneres]. Vance played with him in New Orleans years ago, so he brought him out here when we were looking for a drummer because he knew I'd be very particular in my choice."

"I wanted someone who could play the songs the way I like my songs played. I think the most important thing is that a drummer have good meter. That's first and foremost with me. And he has to be open to making any necessary changes that have to be done to make the songs work. In other words, somebody who won't come in and give me a lot of shit about what I ask him to play—somebody who isn't going to have a real big ego about it, who wants to learn. That's what it's all about. The only way you learn is by trying different things."

For the record, she would sit down with bassist DeGeneres and guitarist Chrissy Shefts to work up the arrangements. "I would get all my drum beats together. Then we'd bring the arrangements in and show them to Steven, and he would

play the drum bits I had written. He might add a few things here and there, but we would always talk about any additions."

Of the 13 songs they recorded, Gina ended up on four of the ten that made the record: "Just A Dream," "Love In Return," "This Time," and "The World Goes 'Round." Live, she is only playing drums on one song, but she plays timbales on three or four songs and guitar on about five of them.

"It was difficult coming out front because I always go through the motions of playing drums. I'm playing air drums half the time," she laughs. "I'll

always play on the albums, but when we play live, I can't sit behind the kit all night and sing. It wouldn't be very exciting, even though it would be the most comfortable and easiest thing in the world for me to do. I play drums on the last song we do in our encore. It's a song by the Beatles called 'Everybody's Got Something To Hide Except For Me And My Monkey.' When we do a bigger tour and we're headlining, I'll definitely play on a lot more songs, but in the situation we're in now, we're either playing clubs or opening the show. There isn't a lot of time, and we don't have a big stage setup because we're usually set up in front of someone else. When we headline a tour, though, I'll do the Phil Collins routine and have my drums set up right next to Steven's. I'll play on more songs because I'll have the time and space to do it right."

Was it difficult starting over at the bottom after being in the very successful Go-Go's? "You can sit around and think, 'Man, I was playing 20,000-seaters and now I'm having to play clubs,' but you forget about that when you get involved with what you're doing. I was talking to Belinda [Carlisle] the other day, and when her first record came out, she did a club tour. So you've got to start over to let people know you're serious

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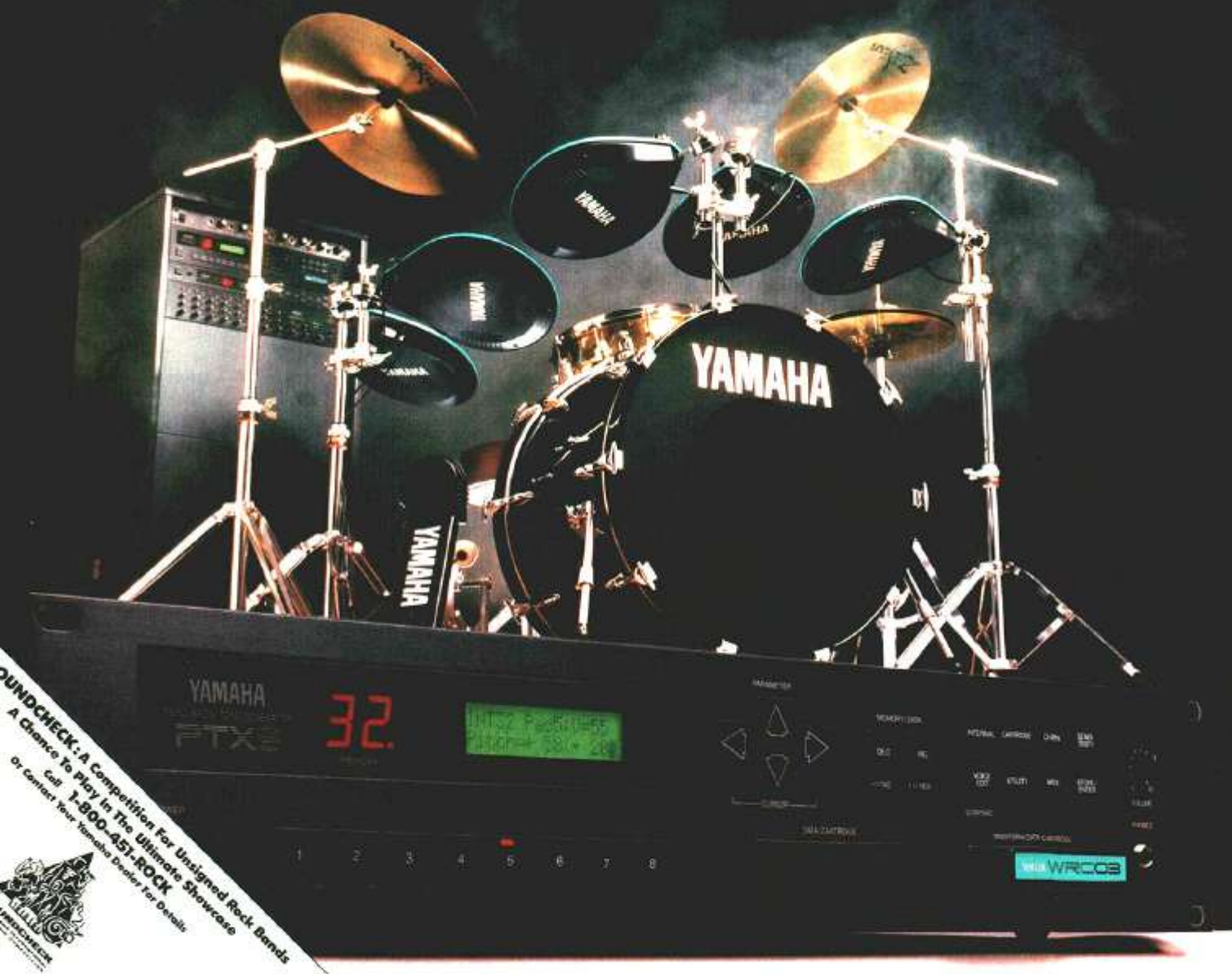
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about what you're doing—that you're not going to sit around and wait for something to happen, that you're going to go out and make it happen. Sure, I'd love to be playing 20,000-seaters instead of clubs, but if I have to start out in clubs, that's what I'll do, because I believe in my music and I love doing it."

—Robyn Flans

Marky Ramone



According to Marky Ramone—who recently returned to The Ramones after a four-year hiatus—playing with this near-classic, quintessential New York rock band is now better than ever. Says Marky: "It's even better this time around because we're all getting along more, and my own head's a lot clearer."

Marky left the band in '83 because "I had a drinking problem," he admits. "I took the right course of direction to correct it, and now it's been four years since I last partied."

"Being totally straight is so much better when it comes to playing drums: Your pacing is steadier, your playing isn't sloppy, and of course your timing is better, too. We play for an hour and 20 minutes a night, and with the pace that we keep during our shows, we have to conserve our energies for the length of the set."

"A Ramones drummer has to constantly play 16th notes on the hi-hat and always has to be ready for the 'one-two-three-

four' counts that the bass player screams out. You have to be right there; there's no hesitating, no talking between songs. That's because the whole idea behind the Ramones is *playing*; there's not a lot of conversing with the crowd. There's the occasional 2/4, but it's basically 4/4 constantly, and the songs are quick—two-and-a-half minute songs."

For the record, Marky joined the Ramones ten years ago after being a member of Richard Hell's Voidoids. Although he isn't the original Ramones drummer, he has been participating in the band longer than any other drummer. When he took leave in '83, he was replaced by Richie (Ramone), who left in '87. He was temporarily replaced by former Eurhythmies and Blondie drummer Clem Burke, who played two gigs with the band prior to Marky's return.

Presently, the Ramones are celebrating their 14th anniversary on tour, and they've released a double-LP of their best-loved tunes entitled *Ramonesmania*, which has been received quite favorably by old and new fans.

"The onslaught of energy with this band keeps me liking what I do," adds Marky. I can play drum fills all over the place if I want to, but that's not a part of the Ramones' music. It's the constant pumping of energy—what we get from the audience and what we give back—that keeps this so interesting for me. Being back for the last year has been like coming home."

—Teri Saccone

David Allen

When Paul Riddle left the Marshall Tucker band four and a half years ago and the interim drummer, James Stroud, left a year later, David Allen took over the drum chair. The album that was just

released on PolyGram has been in the can since Stroud's reign, so he is on all the cuts except the title track, "Still Holding On," which David recorded. Needless to say, David looks forward to the time when he can cut an entire LP with the group, but for now, he is content playing with the band in concert.

"Marshall Tucker is kind of a crossover band, so we can play country nightclubs as well as rock 'n' roll clubs," Allen explains. "We go over with both types of crowds. Actually we're labeled pretty much southern rock/country rock, and our crowds range from 15 to 50 years old."

"The band is really jazz and rock influenced. There are a lot of swing-type songs we do. Most of the time I have to play on top of the beat, just to add some energy to the show. The songs are played hard and they're energetic. A lot of it leans towards a rhythm & blues style of drumming."

"It looks like there are a lot of southern bands out touring now. Lynyrd Skynyrd is back out, Atlanta Rhythm Section is out, the Outlaws just signed a deal, and we're finding a lot of promoters in different areas are more interested in booking us now than they were a few years ago, so the music seems to be more appreciated. Our biggest market is up north. We've never really drawn that well down south."

The band has been so busy that David has had to abandon his teaching. "Last summer I was still teaching part time. It got to where I just had too many irons in the fire, and it really wasn't fair to my students. So finally I had to give up the teaching and devote all my time to the band. I really enjoyed it, though. I learned so much from teaching six hours a day, four or five days a week. The littlest kid would come in and do something so elementary, but maybe it was something I had forgotten about. If the band ever slows down enough, I'll get back into it. I really miss it."

—Robyn Flans

News...

Armand Grimaldi on the road with Al Jarreau...

Eddie Bayers on a Roy Orbison star-studded LP that will include duets with Steve Winwood, Tom Petty, Bob Dylan, and George Harrison. Eddie is also on recent releases by George Strait, Roger Miller, Conway Twitty, John Jarvis, Charly McLain, the McCarter Sisters, Wayne Massey, the Judds, Gene Watson, Barbara Mandrell, Karen Staley, and Ronnie Milsap, and he's on Randy Travis' Christmas LP... **Russ Kunkel** touring with Steve Winwood...

Butch Miles is on a Japanese tour with the Great American Swing Orchestra...

Dino Danelli on the road with the Rascals...

Jonathan Moffett produced and wrote a song that Chico DeBarge recorded for the soundtrack of *Coming To America*. The song is called "All Dressed Up (Ready To Hit The Town)." He can also be heard on Julian Lennon's new album...

Kenny Aronoff on Holly Knight's new record, as well as releases by John Eddy and Gregg Alexander. He has also been giving clinics while on the road with John Cougar Mellencamp...

Vic Mastrianni on the road with Reba McEntire...

James L. Burton has been working with Canadian recording artist Michelle Wright...

John Ferraro has been doing some dates with Albert Lee...

Danny Seraphine on tour with Chicago in support of a new release...

Kevin Winnard on the road with Times Two...

Clint de Gannon on Dionne Warwick's all-Cole Porter album...

Lou Molino touring with Kim Mitchell...

Mark Feldman on recent recording by guitarist Joe Taylor...

John Riley has been gigging with Mike Stern, Mike Metheny, Bob Mintzer, Leni Stern, and Eliane Elias.





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ED SHAUGHNESSY



Q. I'd like to say that you're the most musical big band drummer I've ever listened to. Could you explain in detail the sizes and types of cymbals and drumheads you used on the second *Tonight Show* album?

R.D.
New Orleans LA

A. Thank you for your very kind compliments. I really appreciate your comment that you find my playing "musical." I've found that with big band drumming, what you leave out is just as essential as what

you put in. You have to edit yourself a bit more in big band playing; you can't chatter away as much as you could in a combo.

To start with the heads, all the toms and bass drum batter heads were Ludwig Silver Dots. All the tom bottom heads were heavy, clear Rockers; the bass drum front heads were coated. The snare drum batter was a coated Rocker with a dot, and the snare side head was an extra-thin. All the drums were wide open except for the bass drums, which had felt strips for just the slightest amount of muffling.

The cymbals were all A Zildjians, and included a 2V Rock ride, two 18" medium-thin crashes (right and left sides), a 16" thin crash on the left bass drum, a 22" pang played upside-down, and 15" New Beat hi-hats. Just to round out the picture, I'd like to tell you that the drums were Ludwig Classic models, and that the snare was a 5" Black Beauty. I'm crazy about that drum because it's the only metal drum I know of that has a "woody" quality—not as nasal as most metal drums—but still retains the added projection of a metal snare.

NICKO MCBRAIN



Q. I've been listening to your drumming for many years, from your days with Pat Travers, through Trust, and now with Iron Maiden. I like your style very much. My questions are: First, have you ever used click tracks in the past, and do you use them now with Maiden? Second, your right foot is extremely fast on the single bass drum that you use. Was there a certain way you worked on that?

Tom Bittner
Rush NY

A. I have used click tracks in the past, but not with any of the major bands that I've worked for. I've used them only on some various sessions that I've had to play. The main ones that spring to mind were with a chap called Paul Ives. I had to put some drumming tracks down to some pre-recorded bass and guitar lines that he did in Paris. He brought the tapes to England and I had to put the drums on top. I've never used a click with Iron Maiden. We actually tend to allow the time to move a bit; it's not that dead strict in terms of tempo. There are parts—

say, for instance, a solo—where the time will go off a little forward of the beat, then come back into the groove for the verses. I prefer to work that way.

I didn't really do anything specifically to develop my bass drum foot; it was mainly just lots of playing over the years with the ambition of driving the right foot as much as was humanly possible. As far as technique goes, for speed I find it's a question of being quite comfortably balanced with

the ball of the foot on the pedal. It's much more a question of that than brute force. I sit pretty low; I'm about six feet tall, and when I sit down, my legs are virtually horizontal, parallel to the floor.

I think the demanding side of Iron Maiden—the sort of songs that Steve Harris writes and the bass lines he puts together—tend to dictate what kind of drum patterns should be played. Because of the way a song is structured, that's the way it comes about that I have to play what I do. If I were to put a straight classic rock pattern over it, it would be boring. So I try to concentrate on playing with the bass pattern, or with some of the super-speed guitar riffs.

I should point out that the pedal one uses has a lot to do with speed. I use a standard Ludwig Speed King. It's a result of how you just get used to using something for a long time. I have worked with Sonor pedals, and they're very good. They're very "fiddly," with so many different arrangements you can have for spring tension, beater angle, pedal height, and so on. But I've been a Speed King user for the past 15 or more years. I find that I prefer the simpler, lighter weight pedal. Of course, it must be maintained: It needs to be oiled and greased quite regularly, and when I'm on the road I'll tighten the springs up a quarter of a turn every month or so. That keeps it pretty sweet.

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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. About three years ago I purchased two Paiste cymbals: a 20" Power Ride and a 16" crash. While setting up a few days ago to do some studio work, I noticed a crack in the crash cymbal, about half an inch up from the edge. I find this very unusual, since the Zildjian 15" crash I have (which was used when I purchased it) has not even dented in over six years of playing. This fact, coupled with the fact that I've had no problem with the ride cymbal, has left me with a question: whether or not the crack problem is a result of weather conditions, playing technique, or something else I'm responsible for. If it is, why hasn't the same cracking occurred with my Zildjian crash, which I treat the same as I do the Paiste? To further express my dilemma, my Camber hi-hats, which are over six years old, have held up quite well under the same conditions of play and weather. I'd appreciate your comments.

K.T.

Roeland Park KS

A. There is no way to predict a crack in any cymbal, and very little way to determine indisputably why a crack has occurred. There is also no way to explain why a given cymbal cracks when a similar one doesn't, even though the two are used under the same conditions. Whether a cymbal is new or old is rarely an issue; many drummers keep and use cymbals for decades, while others use up cymbals almost as fast as they do heads or sticks. The brand of cymbal is also generally not a major factor; equal numbers of notable drummers swear by both Zildjian and Paiste cymbals while citing "breakage problems" with whichever line they don't use.

Individual instruments respond differently to identical situations. Obviously, a crash cymbal receives harder, more intense attacks than does a ride, so it's not surprising that your Paiste crash should have cracked while your ride didn't. Weather conditions should not affect cymbals, since their metal alloys have already been tempered by many hundreds of degrees of heat, and would not

likely become brittle or more "prone" to cracking unless they were subjected to sub-arctic cold.

As to whether your playing technique contributed to the cracking of the cymbal, that is always a possibility, but probably not a likely one if it took you three years to crack one cymbal. Most drummers whose technique is so abusive that they crack their cymbals do so quite regularly, and in short order. In your case, it seems to be a case of simply accepting the fact that cymbals cannot be guaranteed to last indefinitely, and must, in the final analysis, be recognized as replaceable items.

Q. It seems that all drum hardware is fairly easy to come by. My question is: Do any drum manufacturers sell unfinished shells for a do-it-yourself drummer to design a personal drumset at an acceptable price?

M.F.

Washington PA

A. Of course, what constitutes an "acceptable price" is up to you. Most of the major drum manufacturers do not sell raw shells, but a number of custom drumshell operations do. According to the 1988 edition of the Modern Drummer Equipment Annual, raw wooden drumshells are available from the famed Drum Company, 229 Hamilton Street, Saugus, Massachusetts 01906; Modern Drum Shop, 167 W. 46th Street, New York, New York 10036; and from Thunderstick, Rt. 2, Box 186, Blue Earth, Minnesota 56013. In addition, raw fiberglass shells are available from A.F. Blaemire, 5208 Monte Bonito Drive, Los Angeles, California 90041, while brass snare drum shells are shown in the catalog of Con Bops of California, 2302 E. 38th Street, Los Angeles, California 90058.

Q. I am having problems obtaining the speed I want from my bass pedal. I recently bought a DW 5000 Turbo, but I can't seem to play it as fast as I want to. Basically, what I want is a pedal that is very easily pushed forward to strike the head, but will spring back extremely fast for the next stroke. Can you give me any adjustment advice? Also, what about tuning my bass drum?

D.S.

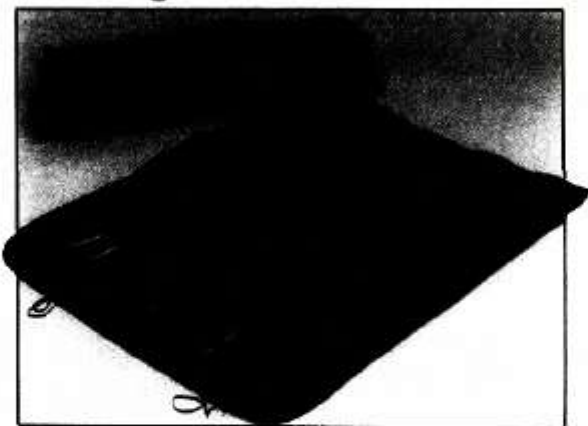
Eastman CA

A. Since you state that you only recently purchased your new pedal, any advice given here must be prefaced with the fact that any type or brand of pedal must be "gotten used to" in order to function to its optimum level. But since you describe a particular action that you are looking for in a pedal, we must mention that the DW 5000 Turbo, like any chain-drive pedal based on a circular sprocket, is not designed to give that particular action. The circular sprocket is designed to give a smooth, even action on both the downstroke and the return. The chain pulls straight down, the sprocket rotates in a circular motion, and thus the leverage is the same at any point on the rotation of the axle. Due to this fact, adjustments for speed are difficult, since tightening the spring for a quick return will make the downstroke that much tighter as well.

The type of action you describe is more likely to be found from a pedal employing an eccentric cam. This is a popular design, represented today by pedals including Drum Workshop's original DW 5000 strap-drive model, the Gretsch Floating Action, and many other lightweight models. The linkage on these pedals is designed so that the leverage is strongest on the downstroke, making it easy to depress the pedal. The more the pedal is depressed, the smaller the radius of the cam becomes, increasing the power of the beater impact. At the same time, the tension placed on the spring also increases proportionately. When the pedal is released, the small radius of the cam allows the spring to return the pedal to its original position very quickly.

It is possible to gain a bit of pedal speed by increasing the tension of the bass drum batter head (for a bit of "bounce"). But doing so may adversely affect the desired pitch and tonality of the drum. Generally speaking, it is better to rely exclusively on the pedal for its own action, and tune the drum for sound purposes alone.

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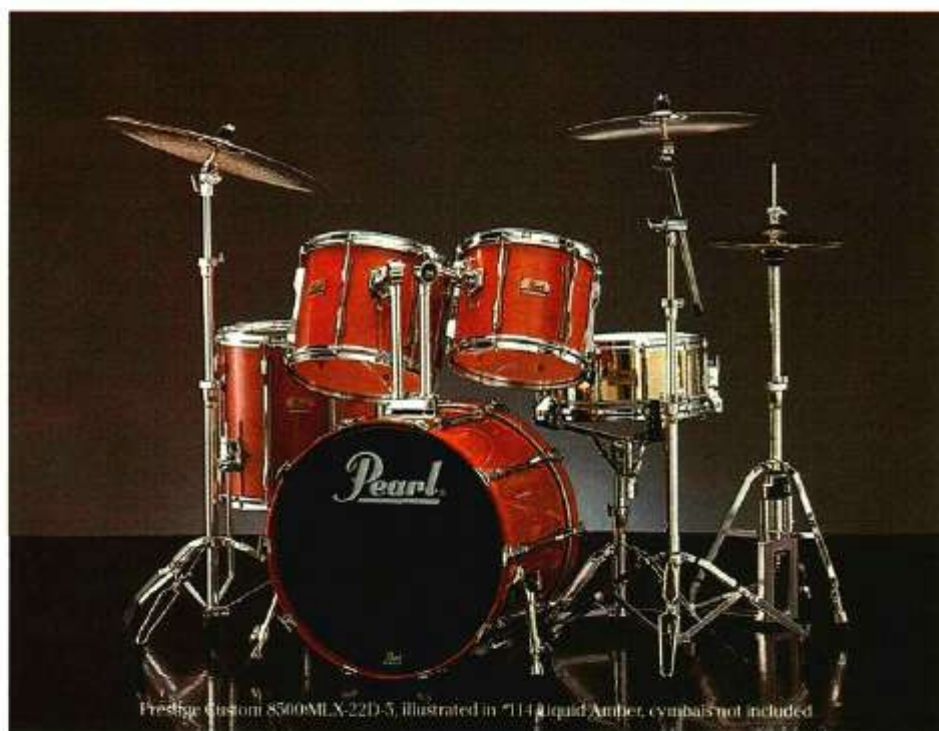
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JEFF POR

EFF PORCARO

I'm driving in my car, thinking about what I'm going to write about Jeff Porcaro. The volume of the radio is nearly off while my mind is preoccupied, but suddenly I'm prompted to turn the music up. What I've heard, almost subliminally, is a groove that feels so good. I laugh when I realize it's Boz Scaggs' "Lowdown," and the subject of my preoccupation is playing drums. I know that I heard that drum track from an almost inaudible radio because I couldn't not hear it. The song ends, and I change the station. The next song that blares from my speakers is "Pamela," from the newest Toto album, The Seventh One. It's that feel again, and it becomes obvious that that's what I want to convey about Jeff Porcaro. Hours later, I'm sitting in a restaurant. In the midst of a conversation with a friend, something I can barely hear in the background catches my attention. It's "Georgie Porgie" from Toto's first album, and I wonder why I haven't noticed any other music that's been played in the restaurant all night. Maybe it has to do with the fact that no one plays a groove like Jeff. If you've ever seen him play live, you know it's because he commits his body and soul to

by Robyn Flans

the

CARO

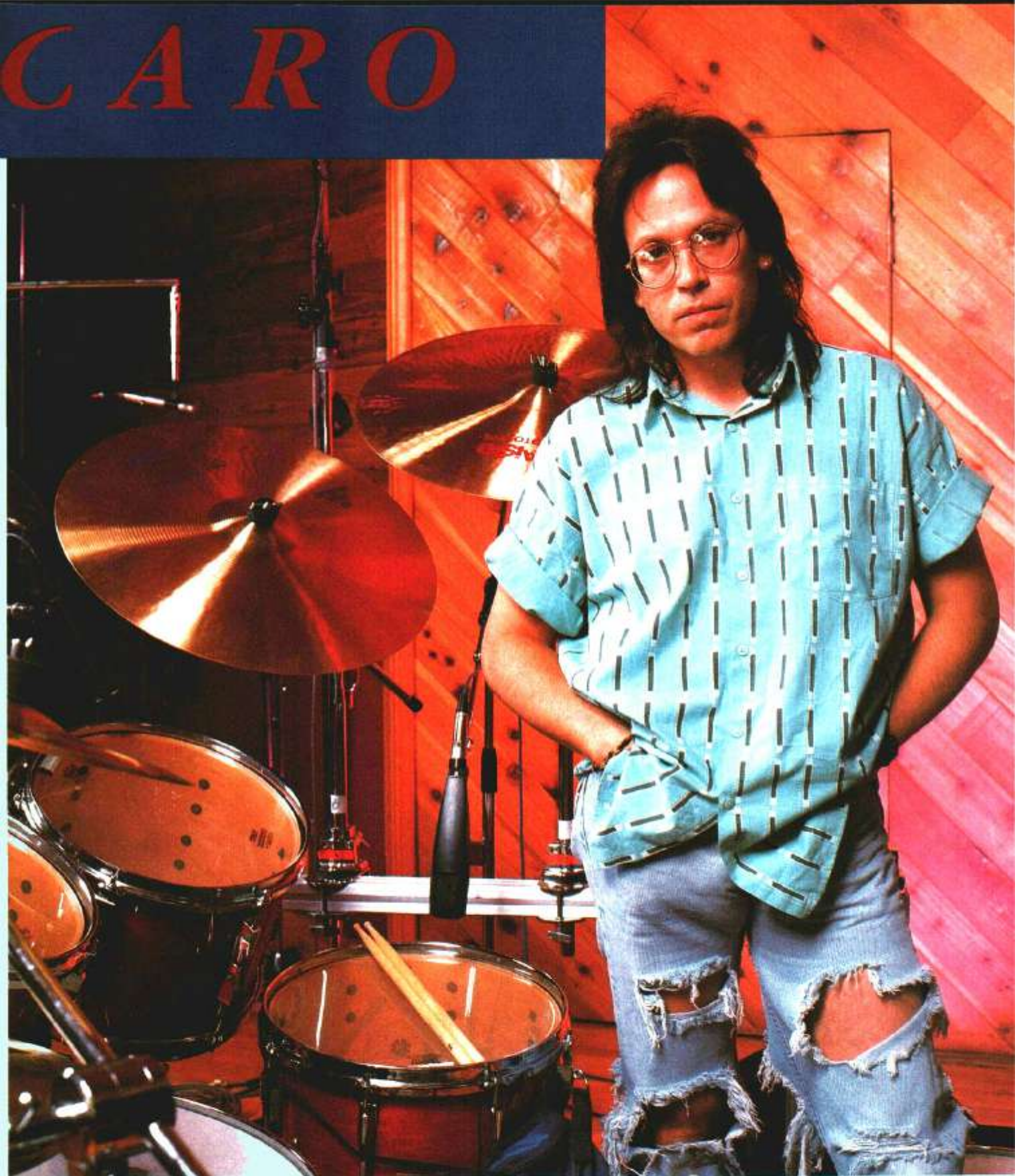


Photo by Jaeger Kotos

feel of the music

MODERN DRUMMER



He'll laugh when he reads this, and I wish I could convey his contagious laugh with words. He's been playing professionally since he was 17, when he left high school to tour with Sonny & Cher, then graduating to one of the more musically hip gigs around—Steely Dan. Then he became one of the most employed session players, working for the full spectrum of artists. He'll laugh at the accolades because he simply doesn't—or won't—acknowledge his special gift-

In my 1983 interview with Jeff, he made one of the most ludicrous statements anyone has ever uttered: "My time sucks." Yeah, right. But Jeff would rather compliment someone he digs than talk about why people dig him. His modesty doesn't allow him to wear attention well, and he insists that his playing is just a stolen combination of influences. What he overlooks is that he has synthesized those influences into a style that is all his own. He may have absorbed his heroes' playing, but what has been born is an amalgamation that is combined with his own vital, vibrant, emotional personality—the animated way he expresses himself verbally, the sensitivity he possesses as a human being, the lack of pretense, and his omnipresent vulnerability. All of that is infused in his performance as a musician and creates that sound that makes me feel a drum track he's played before I can identify the song.

RF: According to Toto's bio, the new album was done differently than the past albums in that it was done live. Is that true?

JP: Somewhat true. The first thing different was that we had coproducers that we worked well with. Toto has always produced their own records, but then we're worried about the technical end, the control room, the engineering, the making of work tapes, and on and on to the mastering of the record. That takes up a lot of time. Plus, when you're producing yourself, you listen to the track as a band. Maybe the track is

burnin', and it feels good, but maybe I'm listening to it and thinking, "I know I could have done a little bit better on that bridge." But I look around and everyone else is quite satisfied, and it is satisfactory, so I'm not going to cause waves by saying, "Let me do another one." I know through experience everyone is going to say, "Man, it sounds great," and we move on, because we're too kind to each other.

On this album, we had Billy Payne and George Massenburg, who we'd all worked with before and respect highly. So if we cut that same track, Billy or George might say, "Ah Jeff, try to do that thing you did earlier on the bridge," and we'll go out and do another one. The reason we would do another one is because we did this album as artists. We weren't worried about all the technical things.

RF: Does it work the other way, too, where you tend to scrutinize too much, and the producer might say, "I think it's cool the way it is"?

JP: That has happened, too, and that's also what they were there for. They were there to push the potential to what it should be. We still tried to arrange, dictate the sounds somewhat, and get the feel we wanted.

But back to live recording, when we did this album, we tried to do as much rhythm section—bass, guitar, keyboards, and drums—in the studio, with live vocal, as possible. This is the first album we've done where we've heard a vocal going on while we cut. On a couple of songs—for instance, "A Thousand Years" and "These Chains"—I actually listened to the demo cassettes through headphones while I recorded the drum tracks. It was like playing along to a record, which I did when I was learning how to play. I did that on those particular tunes because the demos were great, the two guys were singing, so it was definitely the right tempo, and the production of the demos was such that I heard all the parts. So I played along. The only other track that's not live is "You Got Me." That track was a demo that David wrote for Whitney Houston. We heard the song and said, "We should do this in Toto." The song felt great; it was all electronics, drum machine, and stuff, and we decided to add real drums, percussion, real horns, guitar, etc.

RF: The tune "Fahrenheit" was pretty machine-oriented.

JP: There were two tunes on that album that were Synclavier drums, and the rest was real drums. "Fahrenheit" was half Synclavier, and the choruses were real drums.

RF: How electronic are you these days?

JP: Less and less and less and less and less.

RF: Why?

JP: I'm not particularly keen about them—how they are as instruments to play or their sounds. A lot of people are very excited and think their sounds are cool, but it's all very Mattel Toy to me. I still like acoustic drums in a big room, and I feel I can match any sample by playing drums in a proper room with proper recording, proper outboard gear, gates, AMS's, and all sorts of digital things. You can process real drums on the spot and they'll sound just as good as any of the electronic crap around.

RF: Don't you use Dynacord electronic drums?

JP: Yeah, I use Dynacords for a couple of things. I don't trigger Dynacord from my real drums much. Live, instead of setting up a bunch of timbales and gongs, I'll use the Dynacord gong and its gated timbales.

RF: Like on what?

JP: "Africa," the "Dune Theme," "Mushanga," and a couple of things. On this particular tour I won't be using it. Luis Conte will be using my Dynacord stuff and performing those bits of information for us. My brother Steve just produced a couple of tracks for Fernando Saunders, the bass player. We did it at David Paich's studio, where I played my whole Dynacord set. I've done it sometimes for people, but it doubly goes to show me that nothing is as versatile as a real drumset and a human being.

RF: When we did our last interview, machinery was running rampant...

JP: Was I into them then?

RF: You were more into the fantasy of what they could be, because it was just starting.

JP: And I kept looking at them, saying, "You're light years away from where you should be."

RF: But we were talking about being able to phone in a part in perfect time. In our article "Drum Machines, Friend or Foe," you said, and I quote, "I see a future of walking into a studio with a briefcase full of my own sounds—all different kinds of sounds. They will be electronically perfect. I can put them in a Linn machine, or whatever is available in the future, and play like I always play."

JP: It still hasn't happened. Samples have happened, but what I saw potentially back then was something that you could play as a player, and be able to have your own sounds. That will happen in the future. But it has to be something with all the beauty of playing—meaning it's a physical thing, a dynamic thing. When my mind and my body say, "Man, slam it," that has to come off. If they can duplicate what happens with a real acoustic drum, yeah. Nobody's got real dynamics yet. I've heard at the most five increments, and everybody's joking themselves if they think there's more than that. Electronic stuff is cool in its place, but for me personally, it's still like the old days. When I first got Syndrums, I used them on four records: a Boz Scaggs record [*Down Two, Then Left*], a Diana Ross record, a Leo Sayer record [*Thunder In My Heart*], and Carly Simon's "Nobody Does It Better," which was the first record out with Syndrums on it. I did those four records in a one-month period. Right after that I saw a Ford commercial with Syndrums, and I threw up my hands and said, "Okay, that's it." As soon as you hear something on a TV commercial, it's Mattel. It's a toy.

RF: In the studio, do you see a swing back to acoustic drums?

JP: Oh yes, I definitely do. First of all, a lot of people thought we'd save time by programming drums—that they are efficient.

RF: That isn't true?

JP: I don't think that's true. I've gotten a lot of calls in the past two years where people wanted me to replace drum machines. Then they went back to just using clicks. Then they would say, "Let's get a rhythm section." Studio owners have been tearing down the walls of their 200-square-foot rooms for synthesizers to build 1,500-square-foot rooms for live drums again. At least around here I've been seeing that a lot. It's not cost efficient, either. They thought, "I don't have to pay a lousy drummer no more; I can program stuff." But it takes people hours and hours to do that, when a capable drummer can record as many songs in a day and a half as it would take a week to program. And it'll feel better and won't sound like every other record on the radio.

RF: Are you as negative about electronics as you're coming off to be?

JP: They're just not my cup of tea. I react to sounds from electronics as I do to fireworks at Disneyland. I go, "Wow, that was great," but fireworks at Disneyland are not anything like seeing a meteor explode—hearing a real snare drum and the beauty of the drum. If

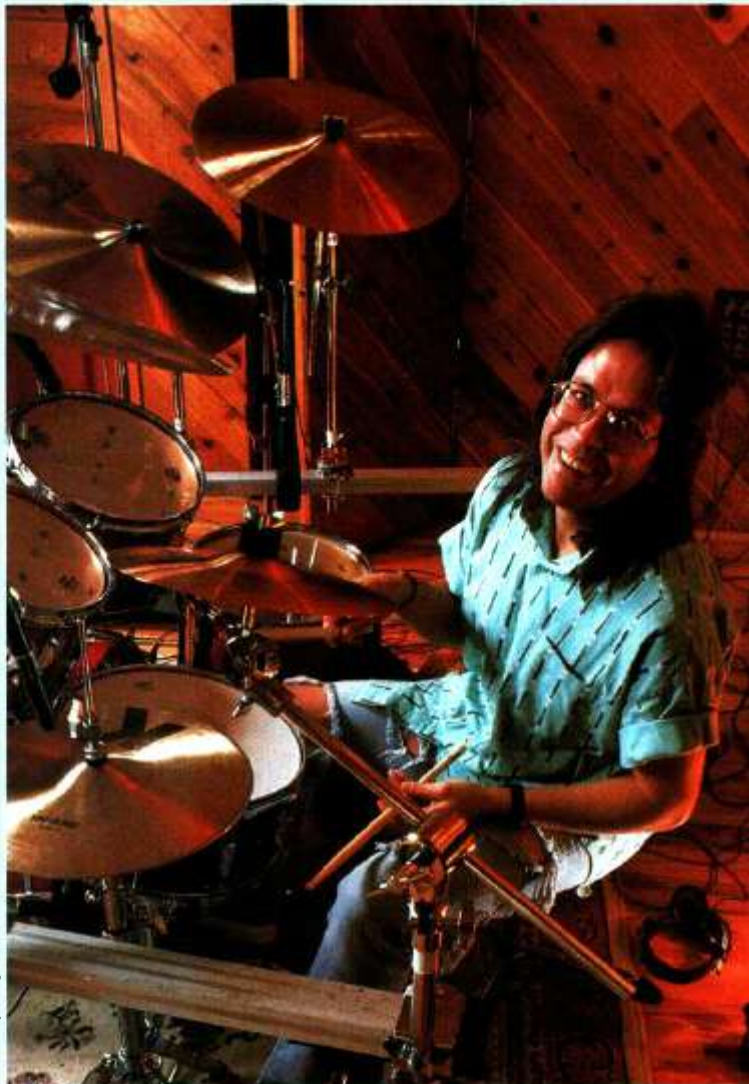


Photo by Jaeger Kotos

it's a tune where you don't want any dynamics out of the drummer, yes, electronics are cool. You can get some pretty far-out electronic sounds, but for me and the music I do, and for my career, gigs come up 10% of the time where I have the opportunity to use those things.

RF: What does your set look like these days?

JP: A standard set. I guess Pearl is calling my set the jazz-style drums. When I went to a photo session, it was with a set of drums that weren't mine. When I got there, I said, "The toms seem deep; these aren't my sizes." They said, "These are the standard sizes." They explained that, in the past couple of years, the power-tom sizes became their standard drum. They have the super power toms, but the standard drums that have been around since the '20s and '30s, they call the jazz drums now. So when you see pictures of me behind a drumset in an ad, it's deceiving. It's my setup, but those aren't my sizes. I use Pearl jazz-size toms, 10", 12", 13", and 14" and 16" floor toms, an 18 x 22 bass drum, a Pearl piccolo snare, a Pearl standard-size metal snare, and I have a Ludwig *Black Beauty* and a 6 1/2" regular Ludwig metal snare drum.

RF: I know you endorse Paiste Cymbals. What hi-hats do you favor, since that's one of your trademarks?

JP: I have several pairs I like. I have a pair of 602 Paistes that I'm in love with. I have a pair of 13" Zildjians—a Z on the bottom and a K on top. One of my favorite pairs is an old, old, old A Zildjian 14" on top and an Italian Tosco on the bottom that has four quarter-



Photo by Jaeger Kolos

inch holes drilled around the bell and two sets of rivets on each north, south, east, and west point on the bottom cymbal. They're incredible. This Tosco is real thick, but very brittle—not a lot of harmonics on the bottom. That combination worked out great. I got the Tosco cymbal when I was in Italy with Toto.

RF: Was work on the hi-hat something you concentrated on as a kid?

JP: No. It was probably the last instrument to come into my repertoire of drum instruments. If it had been important to me or I had studied the hi-hat or paid special attention to the hi-hat in general, it would have been easier. This year, I'm finally comfortable playing quarter notes on the hi-hat through a whole tune or through a whole groove. See, I was never taught that way, so my foot would stay still. I was taught to chick the hi-hat on 2 and 4 from old bebop records, and everything else involved playing the hi-hat closed or a little bit swishy open. I used to listen to all those Sly Stone records with Greg Errico, and I loved his hi-hat stuff, and the guy who took over for him, Andy Newmark. I stole a lot of hi-hat stuff from those two guys, plus David Garibaldi and Bernard Purdie.

RF: So you did think about it?

JP: I thought as much about it as I did bass drum and snare drum stuff. I'm talking about during this period when I was really picking up stuff. Pre-disco R&B stuff had a lot of hi-hat happening. Funk had a lot of nice hi-hat stuff going on, like David Garibaldi and the Tower Of Power stuff. But what I never realized or never heard or had the ears to hear, was that Bernard always kept quarter notes, 8th notes, or even 16th notes going on the hi-hat with his foot—sometimes loud or sometimes real tight and short—while he was playing 16ths or 8ths or whatever on top. This didn't become obvious to me until I got out into the real world and saw a lot more drummers playing. And when I would try to do that...I'm not the most ambidextrous type guy, so coordination with my feet would be real funny. John Guerin does

stuff with his foot that blew my mind. Tony Williams would blow my mind, so then I'd go, "Gee Jeff, you've got to learn at least how to play quarter notes. Oh yeah, this helps my time if I keep quarter notes going while I'm filling. Good idea, Jeff." I didn't realize that until I was 21 years old. By the time I got to be 25 and 26 there were Vinnie Colaiuta and all these guys whose hi-hat technique and ability was incredible. So the only thing I ever woodshed if I'm sitting at a set of drums is doing quarter notes with my left foot.

RF: Back to *The Seventh One*. What are your favorite tracks?

JP: I like them all, I really do. I think each one stands on its own merits.

RF: Did you have particular fun on any of them?

JP: I had fun on "Mushanga" because, walking into the studio, I knew what the thing was going to be, but I wanted to think of a new beat for me—something different. I didn't want one of those situations where, after I heard what I did, it

ends up that I stole it or I'd heard it before in some sort of context. It was fun doing that beat. Now that I know it, I wish we could cut the track again. It was one of those things where I had to figure out the sticking a certain way; there are no overdubs.

RF: Can you explain the beat?

JP: No, this beat of all beats you cannot explain, [laughs] It's impossible. I sat for an hour trying to explain it to my dad, and he was cracking up because it involves hitting every drum, the rim, the head, the hi-hat, and it's all this split-hand stuff. It's basically a simple thing once you do it, but it's confusing to figure out for the first time—at least for me. And as soon as I got it, it was, "Quick, let's cut the track." We just cut it with David and me, and I went into a trance and tried to remember it, because a lot of it had to do with me just getting comfortable with my sticking. The track came out great, but then after we cut it, I finally got the beat down and started adding more things, like playing quarter notes on the hi-hat and things like that.

And I like "These Chains," but that's because it's exactly a rip-off of Bernard Purdie doing "Home At Last" on *Aja*. It's not exactly the same beat, but that was the sole inspiration, just like with "Rosanna." I like "Stay Away" a lot, the rock 'n' roll thing with Linda Ronstadt, and I like "Anna" a lot, and the whole damn album.

RF: The bio also says that there has been sort of a re-commitment to the band, and that you guys are taking less session work in order to spend your energies here. Is that accurate?

JP: Every day that anything is needed for Toto, we're all committed to being here for what we need to do—whether that means touring, making a record, writing, or whatever. Any time in between is up to each individual guy to do what he wants to do with it. Me, I've always done a lot of sessions, and I still do. I've got to admit it, I do sessions. Other guys in Toto have been writing more. When I wake up, I don't get inspired to spend a day or a week writing; that talent is not a natural thing in me. But when I wake up in the morning, I'm tapping my foot, so it's nice if I have a studio to go to so I can play some drums.

RF: I want to go through a list of songs and have you tell me how you came up with the groove and the patterns, and what was the inspiration and the approach.

JP: It's hard for me to remember that stuff, but I'll do the best I can.

RF: Do you remember "Your Gold Teeth II" (Steely Dan)?

JP: Oh yeah! I definitely recall "Your Gold Teeth II." It was written in 6/8, 3/8, and 9/8; that is the way the bar phrases were written for us. It was Chuck Rainey, me, and Michael Omartian for the basic tracking session. We ran it down once, and all of us thought, "Wow, this is going to be unbelievable," especially me, because I

LISTENERS' GUIDE

Q. For readers who'd like to listen to albums that most represent your drumming, which ones would you recommend? (Please list in order of preference.)

Album	Artist	Label	Catalog #
Katy Lied	Steely Dan	MCA	37043
Silk Degrees	Boz Scaggs	Columbia	PC-32760
Toto IV	Toto	Columbia	PC-37728
Teaser	Tommy Bolin	Nemperor	PZ-37534
About Face	David Gilmour	Columbia	PL-39296

Q. Which records have you listened to the most for inspiration?

Album	Artist	Drummer	Label	Catalog #
Pretzel Logic	Steely Dan	Jim Gordon	MCA	37042
The Royal Scam	Steely Dan	Bernard Purdie	MCA	37044
Aretha: Live At The Fillmore West	Aretha Franklin	Bernard Purdie	Atlantic	7205
Accept No Substitute— The Original Delaney & Bonnie & Friends	Delaney & Bonnie	Jim Keltner	Atco	Out Of Print
Houses Of The Holy	Led Zeppelin	John Bonham	Atlantic	SD-19130

was 21 and I wasn't the most experienced bebop player—and I am of the same mind today. When I heard "Gold Teeth II," the first reaction in my nervous little body was, "I am the wrong guy; I should not be here," knowing the kind of tune and knowing those guys real well. They weren't really aware of a lot of drummers back then, but they were aware of Jim Gordon, and I thought Gordon could do a better job playing that. He was more experienced at getting a better feel. I was very nervous about it. Fortunately, the whole rhythm section had a bitch of a time. This was my first sight-reading.

RF: It's a hard song.

JP: Not only that. You say, "Okay, it's a big band....," but it's not a big band. It's a little quartet composition, and the phrasing of the lyrics also had to swing. Fagen did the perfect thing. We lived near each other, and we would hang out and listen to Charlie Mingus together. He gave me some Mingus album with Dannie Richmond on drums, and he said, "Listen to this for two days before coming to the studio." So I listened to Dannie Richmond and tried to copy a couple of things he was doing and copy a couple of things that I had heard my dad play. There was this Mingus vibe to the rhythm of the song. I remember that everybody had such a hard time that we would record other Steely Dan songs, and every night before we'd leave, we'd play "Gold Teeth II" once. I think it was about the fifth or seventh night of a four-week tracking date that we got the track of "Gold Teeth II." Next?

RF: "Lowdown" (Boz Scaggs).

JP: "Lowdown" is from a David Paich composition that he wrote for what would be Toto. David and I had done some demos in late '75, early '76. There was this one song that, when we got to the fade, we snapped into a completely different groove. That groove was bass drum on 1, the last 16th note of the second beat, and the third beat, 16th notes straight on the hi-hat, and snare drum on 2 and 4. Boz Scaggs heard this song and said he wanted to do it, but Paich said no, it was going to be for a group we were going to have one day, but he would give him the fade. So Paich took the fade and wrote "Lowdown" for Boz. Boz wrote lyrics and melody and stuff, and we went into the studio. When we cut "Lowdown," it was 1976 and there was an Earth, Wind & Fire album out that I had been playing over and over again. It might have been *I Am* or the one before that. Instead of 16ths, the groove was quarter notes on the hi-hat with the same beat I just described. We wanted to get that kind of Earth, Wind & Fire medium dance-groove rhythm. But instead of doing quarter notes, I did 8th notes, so if you take

the figure I described to you and substitute 8th notes on the hi-hat, and every two bars or so open the hi-hat on the last 8th note of the fourth beat, that's it.

We cut it that way, but the producer said, "Gee, do you want to try adding 16th notes?" because disco was starting to come in around '76. I wasn't the keenest guy on disco and said, "Naw, you don't want to do that, man. You don't want to ruin the groove." He said, "Just try it," and Paich and Boz said so too, so I overdubbed the hi-hat, which they put on the opposite side of the stereo mix. While I was overdubbing the simple 16ths, I started doing some accents and answering my hi-hat stuff, and it got to be a lot of fun.

RF: "Love Me Tomorrow" (Boz Scaggs).

JP: The most reggae that I had heard at that part of my life was probably Bob Marley. I hadn't heard of Peter Tosh or any of those cats yet. Maybe the most up-to-date record that would tell you what I'm talking about would be "Kid Charlemagne," but if you listen to the groove on that and on "Haitian Divorce" from *The Royal Scam*, that's Bernard Purdie. You'll hear some of the same kind of groove on the Aretha and King Curtis *Live At the Fillmore West* albums, both of which Bernard Purdie played on. On *King Curtis Live At the Fillmore West*, when they do "Memphis Soul Stew," you get a taste of this Bernard Purdie loop that I've heard a lot from Rick Marotta, too. My main influence for "Love Me Tomorrow" was the Bernard Purdie kind of shuffling type loop, very reggaeish, but it's a bad imitation of Purdie.

RF: Were those timbales on it?

JP: Yes, set up right by the drums, and it was me.

RF: "Hold The Line" (Toto).

JP: That was me trying to play like Sly Stone's original drummer, Greg Errico, who played drums on "Hot Fun In The Summertime." The hi-hat is doing triplets, the snare drum is playing 2 and 4 backbeats, and the bass drum is on 1 and the & of 2. That 8th note on the second beat is an 8th-note triplet feel, pushed. When we did the tune, I said, "Gee, this is going to be a heavy four-on-the-floor rocker, but we want a Sly groove." The triplet groove of the tune was David's writing. It was taking the Sly groove and meshing it with a harder rock caveman approach.

RF: "Georgie Porgie" (Toto).

JP: "Georgie Porgie" is imitating all the Maurice and Freddie White stuff, it's imitating Paul Humphrey heavily, it's imitating Earl Palmer very heavily. When it comes to that groove, my

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Photo by Ebel Roberts

It seems hard to believe that it's been seven years since the release of Jean-Luc Ponty's album Mystical Adventures. When that album was first released in 1981, fusion-drumming fans kept asking, "Who is this guy?" and "Where did this guy come from?" This "guy," drummer Rayford Griffin, came out of nowhere with a sound and style all his own.

For followers of fusion music, master electronic violinist Jean-Luc Ponty is no stranger. His first major exposure came from being a member of the second Mahavishnu Orchestra, and since that time Ponty has been one of the few original fusion artists to successfully lead his own band. These bands have included some of the finest musicians performing today, including Ndugu Chancier, Mark Craney, Casey Scheuerell, and Steve Smith. It's a testament to Rayford Griffin's talent and ability that he has remained in Ponty's band for longer than any previous drummer, having recorded five albums with the violinist thus far.

The Real Fusion

by William F. Miller



Photo by Ebet Roberts

Besides his main gig with Ponty, Rayford has worked with several other artists including Patrice Rushen, Cameo, Wilton Felder, The Isley Brothers, George Howard, and Stanley Clarke. In fact, in a recent *Musician* magazine interview, Stanley Clarke singled out Rayford as being the best young drummer happening today.

The following interview was conducted before a performance with Jean-Luc Ponty at Carnegie Hall. At that concert, Rayford showed why he has been so highly touted. He combined taste with a great degree of technical skills, and his drum solo brought the capacity audience to their feet. For a man who came out of nowhere seven years ago, Rayford Griffin has risen to become one of the best.

WFM: Where are you from originally?

RG: I'm from Indianapolis, Indiana, but I lived in Houston for a little while. I started playing drums in Houston when I was ten, and I moved back to Indianapolis in '69. I played in the marching band and did all of that. I studied for about three years during high school with Tom Akins, who is the timpanist with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. I attended a whole year [laughs] at Indiana State in Terre Haute as a music major studying percussion. Then I joined a band called Merging Traffic, and on our second gig we opened up for Jean-Luc Ponty. That was in 1977. In 1978, Jean-Luc toured through town again, and we opened for him again. In '79, he came to town again, and this time I went to the show and talked to him backstage. He remembered me from the previous two years, and he told me to send him a tape. About nine months later, Jean-Luc called and said that he was holding auditions. I had to scrape and borrow the money just to fly out to L.A. for the audition. I ended up getting the gig.

WFM: What type of music were you playing in Merging Traffic?

RG: It was fusion, very similar to what Jean-Luc was doing at the time. Return To Forever was an influence. It was all original music. The style was from what I call the original fusion style. The word "fusion" has since become bastardized, in my opinion. When I think of the term "fusion," Jean-Luc, Return To Forever, Billy Cobham, Chick Corea, and all those cats who pioneered the style are what come to mind. Now "fusion" is used for acts such as Spyro Gyra or Grover Washington, and to me, that just doesn't get it.

WFM: Tell me about your audition for Ponty.

RG: Well, I was bugging out because most of the other guys who auditioned were from L.A., or at least from California, so they all had their drums. Since I was coming from Indianapolis, I couldn't afford to fly my drums out there. I did bring my snare drum and cymbals, though. I had been playing a lot of double bass, so that's what I would have preferred to audition on, but they rented a single bass Ludwig kit, so I wasn't that comfortable with it. I played the audition, and Jean-Luc told me to come back the next day because he wanted to hear me again. However, the next morning he called me back to say that he had listened to the tape again and that I could have the gig, without having to play for him again.

WFM: What did Ponty have you play at your audition?

RG: Well, we played things from his previous album at that time, which I was very familiar with because I was so into his style. I was accustomed to the way that his music was played and the way other guys interpreted his music. Randy Jackson, who had played with Narada and Billy Cobham, was playing bass for the audition. Randy and I locked right in. In fact, during the audition Jean-Luc asked us if we had played together before. I think we were so tight because he had worked with Billy and Narada, and I was so heavily influenced by their music that we thought in a very similar musical way. Everything just worked out great.

WFM: Were you intimidated at all knowing that you were following in the footsteps of some very impressive players? Ponty had played with Narada in the second Mahavishnu Orchestra, and he had people like Ndugu Chanier, Steve Smith, and Casey Scheuerell in his bands previous to you. I would think that might be intimidating.

RG: I wasn't that intimidated. I had done a lot of playing up to that point, and whenever I would listen to those albums, I would say to myself, "I can do that!" I kind of had that attitude. I was nervous at the audition though, mainly because I was playing a set that I wasn't familiar with.

WFM: I'd like to backtrack for a minute and find out how and why you started drumming.

RG: My uncle was Clifford Brown, the jazz trumpeter. I can remember being five or six, and hearing my uncle's records. From listening to those records, the thing that my ear went to more than anything else was the drums. I was always beating on stuff with pencils. When I was in fourth grade, my brother Reggie started playing saxophone. I was like, "He's playing saxophone; I want to play something too!" So I started studying drums. It seems to me that, even way back then, I knew that playing the drums was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I wanted to play music as opposed to being a banker or a fireman or an astronaut.

WFM: Since Clifford Brown was your uncle, I would imagine that jazz was your first big influence.

RG: Well, when I first started playing, I only had one drum. When I finally did get a drumset, it wasn't jazz that I was playing. I used to go down in the basement and listen to Kool & The Gang, Isaac Hayes, and Jimi Hendrix. A few years later, my brother started bringing home Mahavishnu Orchestra albums, and I got into that. As a matter of fact, that freaked me totally out. For a long time, I thought Billy Cobham was the only drummer alive. Everybody else, to me, was just bullshittin' on the drums. All the bands that I played in were a little more progressive. I never really played in a Top-40 band, which I think helped to prepare me for the music I play now with Jean-Luc.

WFM: What type of formal training did you have?

RG: It was mainly just drumset and timpani, back when I was studying with Tom Akins.

WFM: Did you have any rudimental training? I seem to hear a lot of that in your playing.

RG: That's what a lot of people say. There wasn't a lot of emphasis on rudiments when I was studying. I was taken through the rudiments when I was younger. I would practice what was there, but I didn't put much emphasis on it. It surprises me that people think I'm that type of drummer, because I have never thought of myself that way. I never did any drum corps or anything like that.

WFM: Your first name gig was with Jean-Luc Ponty. How long

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Griffin's Grooves

by William F. Miller

MUSIC KEY



The grooves that follow demonstrate some of Rayford Griffin's playing on a few different Jean-Luc Ponty recordings. Rayford's confident drumming always grooves, whether he is playing a complicated odd meter or a simple rock beat. And his excellent technique can be inspiring.

This first example is the title track from the Ponty album *Mystical Adventures* (Atlantic SD 19333), and this is the beat that Rayford plays on

part 1. When playing this beat be sure to open the hi-hat where indicated. This beat isn't as easy as it looks.



The next example is also from "Mystical Adventures," this being part 3 of the suite. The first measure is the pattern Rayford plays during the bridge section of the tune, and the second measure is from the guitar solo section.



The following beats are from the tune "Jig," also from *Adventures*. The first measure is the intro pattern, and the second is the solo-section beat.



The next three examples are from the Jean-Luc Ponty album *Fables* (Atlantic 7 81276-1). This two-bar phrase from "Elephants In Love" really grooves.



This odd-meter beat is from the tune "Radioactive Legacy." Notice how the accents on the hi-hat set up four-note phrases that remain constant, which changes the emphasis from an upbeat feel to a



Photo by Lissa Wales

downbeat feel when going from measure to measure.



This is the beat to "Cat's Tales," which Rayford plays in the guitar solo section. This beat looks simple, but the way these few notes are phrased makes for an interesting beat.



The last two examples are from the most recent Jean-Luc Ponty album, *The Gift Of Time* (Columbia FC 40983). This rather complicated beat is from the tune "New Resolutions," from the ending section of the song. Rayford accents on the hi-hat and plays tom notes that correspond with the other instruments on the track.



This last example is from the song "Metamorphosis."



Rikki Rockett takes issue with those who think of drums as a backup instrument and drummers as musicians who support the "key figures" in a band. In the years since he and singer Bret Michaels organized the successful rock group Poison, Rikki has worked long and hard to become a drummer who is as entertaining visually as he is acoustically. Leaping from behind his drumkit, flailing his arms about, and generally matching the choreography of the band is Rikki's unique style of showmanship. So it's not surprising that many fans come to Poison concerts just to see and hear Rikki Rockett play.

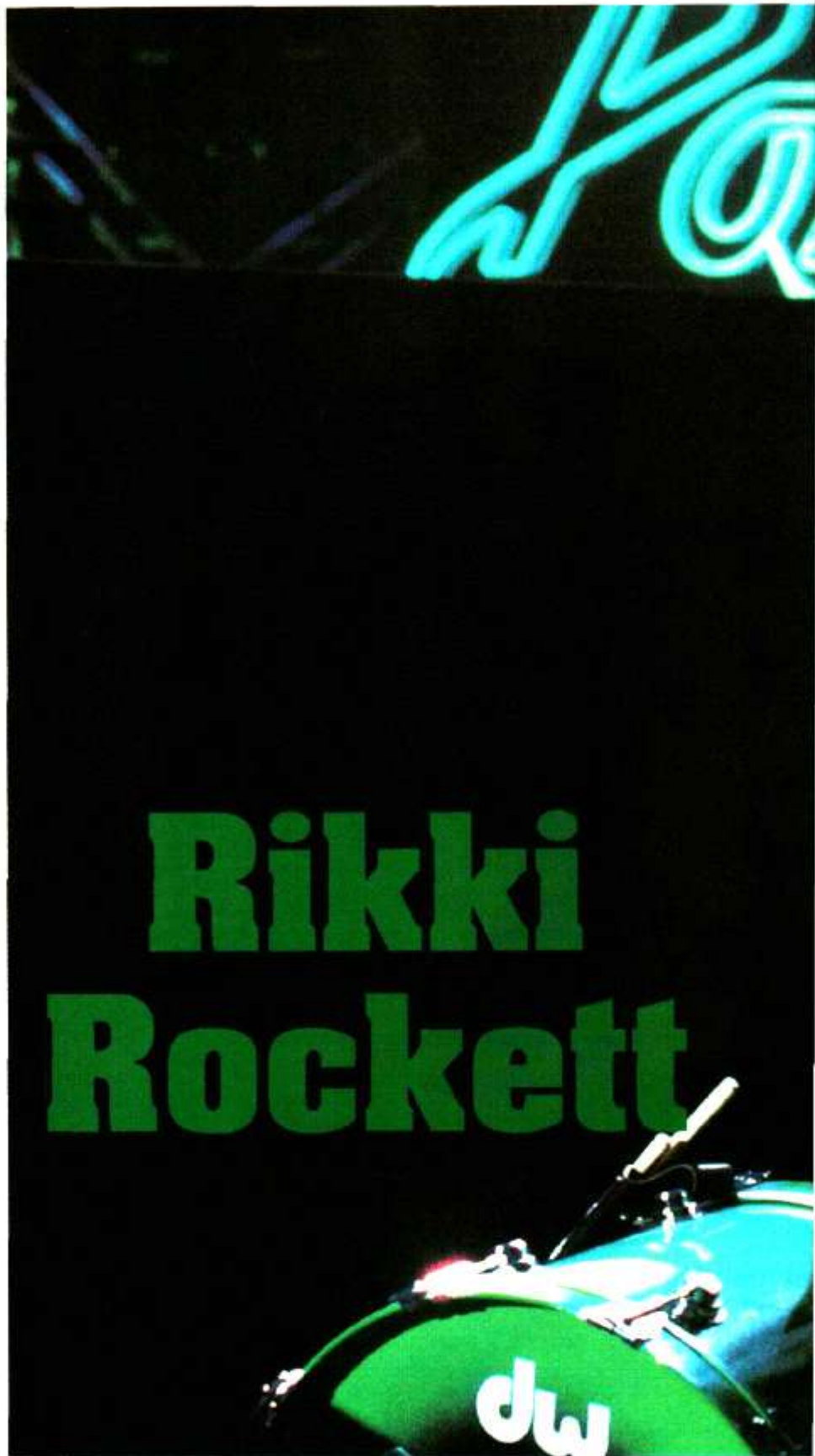


Photo by Mark Weiss



by Mary Ann Bachemin and Mark Konrad

MD: When did you first take an interest in drums?

RR: I was 10 years old at the time, and my sister had a boyfriend who played bongos. One day he left them out in the car, and I took them into the house and started playing around. I liked them so much that when he came looking for them, I hid them under my bed. Eventually, I confessed to the theft, and because he already bought a new set, he let me keep them.

role models in the beginning?

RR: Peter Criss from Kiss, Bun E. Carlos of Cheap Trick, Joey Kramer of Aerosmith, Phil Rudd from AC/DC, Joe X. Dube [Starz], Dicky Diamond [Sparks], and of course, Keith Moon.

MD: And now?

RR: There are so many great drummers out there. I can always pick up *Modern Drummer* and find an interview on a great drummer—sometimes someone I'm not

other drummers?

RR: I study their techniques, even play along to their records, but my playing will never sound exactly like theirs because I have my own interpretation and style of playing. Our new album, *Open Up And Say...Ahh!*, has some real boogie-woogie type songs. For ideas, I went back and listened to Tommy Aldridge, who's a great rhythm & blues drummer. When it came time for something more solid, more rock-bottom, I took time to listen back through Led Zep albums. I think it's important to not get buried in a one-style coffin.

MD: How important is showmanship to you?

RR: I think it's very important; it's important to rock 'n' roll in general. Musicianship, image, and showmanship in roughly equal parts is ideal.

MD: On stage, you seem to enjoy leaping out from behind the drumkit. Does this help your playing or is it just pure showmanship?

RR: [laughs] It's my medication! No, at any time you do something other than just play, your concentration and accuracy are at risk. It can be very difficult to do both, but it *is* a show, so *both* are important. Who said it was supposed to be easy?

MD: Throwing in some extra visuals seems particularly important since Poison is a visual, excitement-oriented band.

RR: That's right. Frankly, a lot of bands won't tour at all because they feel their live performance will endanger their credibility as musicians, and a lot more *shouldn't* play live, because they're so damn boring to watch!

MD: How do you prepare for the tenseness and excitement of a live show and still remain psyched up for it?

RR: I'm always a nut case just before showtime. I have to keep moving; I stretch, do some sticking that Bun E. Carlos showed me, and basically go over the show in my mind.

MD: Does the excitement of being on stage help your playing, and do you miss that in the studio?

RR: Oh, definitely! It does change things being in the studio. I approach the studio in a whole different way. I strive for precision while trying to envision what it will be like live; that gets me excited and keeps my enthusiasm up. That's what rock 'n' roll is all about.

MD: Do you prefer recording live, with all the band members playing at once, or multitracking each instrument one at a time, looking for technical perfection?

RR: I love a "live" sound. But in order to compete with other bands that do extensive multitracking and overdubbing and



Photo by Anna Maria DiSanto

MD: So you were on your way to becoming a drummer...or a thief. When did you start playing acoustic drums?

RR: When I was 12 my parents bought—and let me emphasize the word "bought"—me a set for \$50. I began practicing to my mom's Elvis records, my sister's Beatles records, and my own Johnny Winter albums. I never had a bona fide teacher, although my brother-in-law—the guy I stole the bongos from—taught me pretty much everything he knew.

MD: Did you do any playing in school?

RR: After a brief attempt at trying to play trumpet in a school band, I decided to stick to drums and rock 'n' roll, my first loves. During the next several years, I went through a slew of basement bands. Eventually I formed a band that got gigs playing clubs in our home state of Pennsylvania. Things really started happening when I hooked up with Bret Michaels and we formed Paris, a visually-oriented band that was basically the same concept as Poison. Bobby and C.C. joined up, we moved to Los Angeles, changed our name to Poison, and started working the local club circuit.

MD: Who were your drumming heroes or

even familiar with—and learn something from that person because of his or her skill. But if I'm going to name names, I guess I'd also add Alex Van Halen, Bobby Blotzer, Tony Thompson, Shelia E., Neil Peart, Bill Bruford, Terry Bozzio, and Tommy Lee.

MD: All these people influence the work you do, combined with your own experience?

RR: Yes. I think you can't help but wind up being a product of your influences.

MD: How so?

RR: It's almost automatic to try things you've heard on records, to see if something like that will work for what you want to do. Influences become a point of reference. I usually try all sorts of things covering a broad range of music. By the time I've settled in on something or some combination of things that fit the part I need, it's become my own style.

MD: So you don't consciously try to copy

"A LOT OF BANDS SHOULDN'T PLAY

such, you have to utilize the technology available now. My goal, though, is to go into the studio, shoot for technical perfection, but make it sound like I just went in there and winged it. I don't want it to sound like there's an orchestra or all these sequencers going off. When the people who buy records see you live, they want to hear the same sound, to see you play what they hear on the record.

MD: Then you don't use electronic drums on stage?

RR: I do, but only for effects. The fans want to see what the hell I'm hitting.

MD: Do you prefer acoustic drums to electronic drums?

RR: I do. Most of the new electronic drums are touch-sensitive, but there's still a certain feeling missing...and you can't hit rims. I like electronic drums and I think they have their place. Out on tour I know that there's going to be some effects I've used in the studio that I'll want to reproduce live. The only way I'm going to be able to do that is to sample the sounds and pop them out later on stage. So there are times when I'll use electronic drums.

MD: So the new album was done with live acoustic drums?

RR: Yes. I thought at some point in time I might have to go back into the studio and overdub a bunch of samples, but I did only a few samples. There were a couple of times I used RotoToms for the beginning of a song or someplace where I wanted a very specialized sound. Basically, we did the whole album with straight acoustic drums and a few samples thrown in here and there for the fun of it.

MD: Are you more satisfied with your performance on *Open Up And Say...Ahh!* as compared to *Look What The Cat Dragged In*?

RR: I like it a lot better! I had more time and money at my disposal. *Look What The Cat Dragged In* was done in 12 days on a \$30,000 budget. I know guys who spend that kind of money on drum tracks alone in one day. As we were working on the new album, if something didn't sound right to me, I could move on to the next song. The next day, after I'd thought it over and messed around with the troublesome part, I'd try it again. This has been the most comfortable I've ever been in a studio situation. I had the drums set up the way I wanted them, and I was surrounded by a group of very positive people.

MD: Positive as in "yes men"?

RR: Definitely not. Positive in the sense that if I made a mistake, the producer or engineer would say, "That was a little 'out there,' but everything else sounded great, so let's take it again." Somebody else might

Drums: Drum Workshop with custom green finish.

Cymbals:

Zildjian.

A. 8x 14 brass or 6 x 14 maple snare

B. 9 x 10 rack tom

C. 10 x 12 rack tom

D. 12 x 14 floor tom

E. 14 x 16 floor tom

F. 16 x 22 bass drum

G. 16 x 22 bass drum

H. *Duo Pads* (electronic drums)

1. 14" Z *Dyno Beat* hi-hats

2. 10" A splash

3. 17" A rock crash

4. 20" or 22" Z *Heavy Power Ride*

5. 18" K crash ride

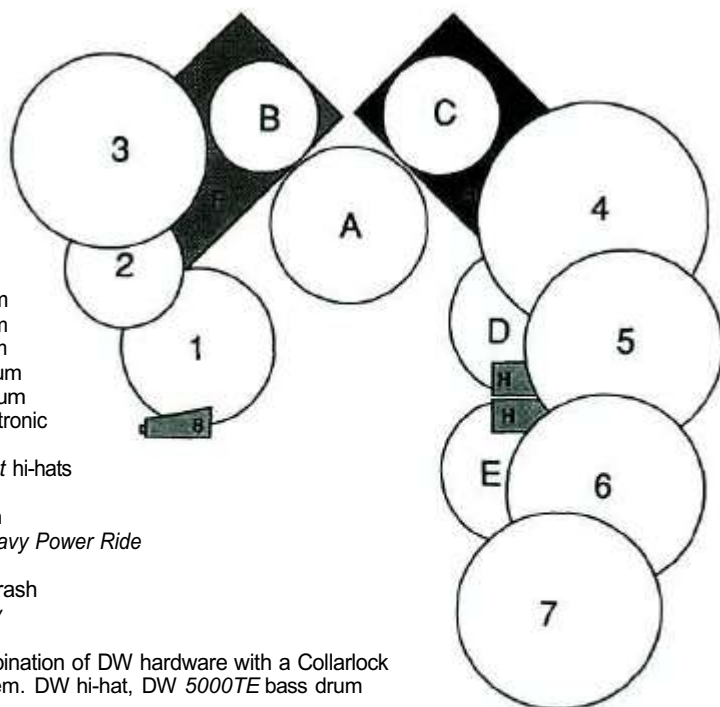
6. 18" A medium crash

7. 19" K *China Boy*

8. LP cowbell

Hardware: A combination of DW hardware with a Collarlock drum support system. DW hi-hat, DW 5000TE bass drum pedals.

Electronics: Dynacord *Add-one* digital drums and Drum Workshop *Duo Pads* (kick and snare only) triggering Rikki's own samples using an Akai S-900 digital sampler.



have said, "Hey! What's wrong with you? You're really screwing up!" In the studio, you've got to have people who are both positive and helpful, because it's almost inevitable that you're going to be hard on yourself.

MD: When you listen back to the work you've done, do you tend to be overly critical?

RR: I think almost every musician, after listening to his own work, thinks he could have done it better. It's all because you want to do the very best you can. If I do a drum track and two weeks later I listen to it, I'm sure I could have done it better.

MD: Is that how you feel about *Open Up And Say...Ahh!*?

RR: With this new album, I put in a lot more time than I ever have before—cut out my social life and even lost my girlfriend. I would go to rehearsal at 1:00 in the afternoon and not finish until about 9:00 at night. Then I'd take my portable four-track home and use either my drum machine or play beats on the *Octapad*. I would play just kick and snare the whole way through on track two, and turn around and play hi-hats and fills on track three. After a while, I'd have a whole song with drums included. I'd be able to sit back and say, "Now, when this goes on the vinyl, am I gonna want it to sound like this?" I figured, once I had

everything in my mind, then it was down to where it sounded like a good song. Time afforded me that luxury. We really had to rush our first record. The most we hoped to gain from it was enough groundwork to set ourselves up for the next record—a bigger budget, more time, and some name recognition. But it turned out that *Look What The Cat Dragged In* really skyrocketed. It did ten times what we hoped it would do. But I still listen to it and think, "God, I wish I could've done it differently."

MD: Are you a "feel" player as opposed to a "technical" player?

RR: I guess I am more of a "feel" player. I don't play mathematically. I don't really count things out unless there's a break coming up or there's something that *has* to be counted. I can read music to a degree, but I'm very slow at it. I certainly can't sight read, but I can figure out a chart if I really look at it for a while, play around with it, and have someone tell me whether I'm right or wrong.

MD: Do you consider this a weakness for you?

RR: Yes, and it's something I've started to work on. Using a drum machine and learning to program it has helped me learn notation and charts a helluva lot more.

MD: Do you try to play right on the beat, behind it, or ahead of it?

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LIVE BECAUSE THEY'RE SO DAMN BORING TO WATCH!"



The city of Miami is becoming, more and more, a melting pot of different peoples, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds. With these varied cultures comes a wealth of musical sounds and styles. It seems appropriate, then, that within this community thrives one of the most innovative music schools in the country: the University of Miami.

The School of Music at the University of Miami first opened in 1926, and since that time has grown to become the largest school of its kind at any private institution of higher learning in the U.S. The success of this school can be largely attributed to the truly innovative course studies that have been created at the university. The primary concern of the school has been to offer its graduates the tools necessary for success in the music business.

The University of Miami's degree programs reflect the school's desire to offer its students an education in music that can cover the entire spectrum, from the traditional to the most current trends in today's music. The degree programs offered include the more traditional areas such as Music Performance, Music Education, and Composition. In addition to these, the University of Miami was the first school to offer degrees in Music Merchandising (now called Music Industry), Music Engineering Technology, and Studio Music and Jazz.

At a school where innovation and forward thinking is sought, the percussion department is, by all means, leading in that direction. Much of the credit for this can be attributed to Fred Wickstrom, the head of the percussion department: "My responsibilities here have been to establish a curriculum that we—I and the other percussion instructors here—feel is meaningful in today's music. We continually update our program to meet current trends."

Fred first came to the University of Miami over 20 years ago. Prior to coming to the university, he had drumset and percussion training in addition to a multitude of varied performance experiences in his hometown of Chicago. Fred received degrees from Northwestern and the University of Illinois, where he received his master's in percussion after studying with Jack McKenzie. In addition to his considerable training, Fred has performed with the

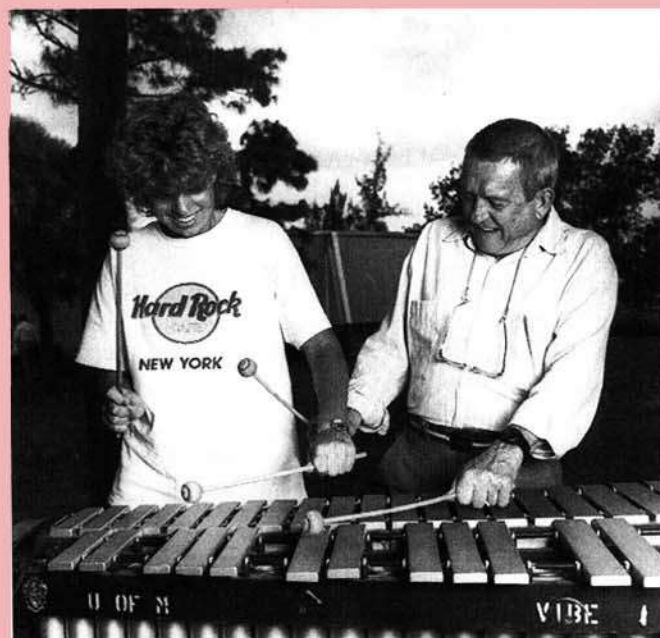
Grant Park Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, and on network television shows, has backed recording and show business stars in Miami Beach, and was the principal percussionist and timpanist with the Florida Philharmonic. He also has two published books on percussion, *Keyboard Mastery For Mallet Percussion* and *Latin Percussion Techniques For Rock, Pop, and Jazz*.

When Fred first came to the University of Miami, he was interested in making the percussion program as contempo-

rary as possible. According to Fred, "The first curriculum that I implemented was very much a carbon copy of the University of Illinois program. However, the one thing I did add to that was the study of drumset. Believe it or not, I was looked at as being a bit of a rebel for doing that. Now, with our new drumset curriculum, this perception of me will probably increase. That's okay. It doesn't bother me.

"I've always prided myself in being both a diverse player and teacher," he continues. "I firmly believe that hands, rhythmic relationships, and reading ability can, initially, be best developed on a single-surface instrument, which is the snare drum. If a student develops basic skills on snare drum, they can be modified and used on other instruments. I consider myself a good snare drum teacher. Also, I've always earned a portion of my income behind the drumset. I still love to play drums, and I feel I have

Harry Hawthorne



UNIVERSITY of MIAMI

DRUMS ON CAMPUS

some things to pass on in that area. Having approached keyboard percussion from being a drummer first myself, I'm able to help others over that transition, teaching vibes, marimba, and now MIDI mallet controllers. I feel I'm a strong mallet teacher up to the point of the virtuosic repertoire that many people are playing now. With experience playing timpani and acting as principal percussionist in a symphony orchestra, I have a good grasp of orchestral percussion. In building the program here, I've surrounded myself with a faculty and teaching assistants, each of whom cover some aspect of percussion in depth."

Over the years, Fred has built up the percussion program in many ways. He founded the U. of M.'s percussion and marimba ensembles, playing traditional percussion works as well as getting into more esoteric-type pieces as well. Muses Fred, "A couple of years ago at a PAS convention, I ran into one of my old, more traditional percussion friends who asked me if I was still teaching a lot of drumset down here at the University. Two minutes later, I bumped into another old friend, and while we were discussing music he said to me, 'Oh, you always did like the kind of music where you're banging on a bunch of flower pots.' [laughs] So, I don't think anybody really has my number, and that's fine! I like to do it all."

The other members of the University of Miami percussion and drumset faculty include Harry Hawthorne, Steve Bagby, Tim Richards, and Steve Rucker. Each of these men has his own field of expertise in percussion. Harry Hawthorne has performed with Glenn Miller, Tex Benecke, and Skitch Henderson's Orchestra, and he's also a former staff musician for NBC and ABC in Chicago. Steve Bagby is a drumset specialist, and has performed with Ira Sullivan, Sonny Stitt, and Red Rodney. Tim Richards, the tabla instructor, is a former student of tabla virtuoso Pandit Sharda Shai, and he is the recipient of

a Smithsonian grant for study and performance of tabla in India. Steve Rucker, a drumset specialist, has performed and/or recorded with Joe Sample, Bob James, Hiram Bullock, Jaco Pastorius, Dave Liebman, Paquito D' Rivera, Randy Bernsen, and the Ross-Levine Band, as well as doing extensive recording work and shows in the Miami area. Steve is the jazz percussion instructor, who, as he puts it, serves as "the go-between between the Studio Music and Jazz department



Fred Wickstrom

Photos on pages 32 & 33 by Atto Mauro

and the Instrumental Performance department."

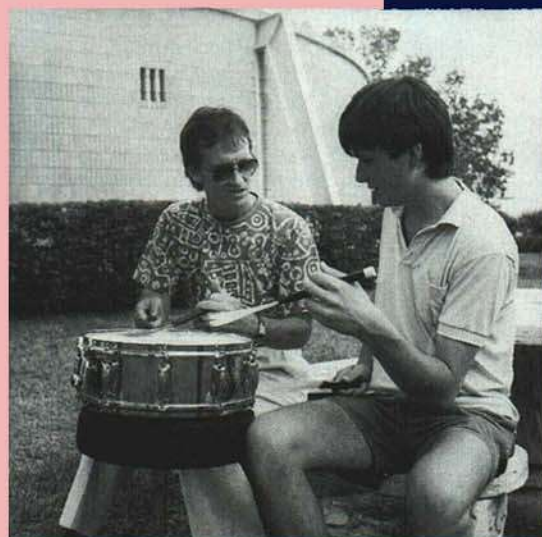
In any given semester, the percussion department has between 50 and 60 students. Within that number are Studio Music and Jazz majors, Performance majors, Music Industry majors, Music Engineering Technology majors, and Music Theory and Composition majors. According to Steve Rucker, "Of the 50 or 60 total, 35 to 40 of these students are primarily interested in drumset. Of those, about 20 are Studio Music and Jazz majors."

"With that number of students," says Fred Wickstrom, "we are able to give all of the drumset and percussion students good ensemble experience. They all have places to play and grow." And Steve Rucker adds, "One of the

Steve Rucker (seated)



Steve Bagby (left)





Dean Anderson (left), chairman of the percussion department, with Steve Smith at a recent clinic.

Boston's Berklee College of Music was founded in 1945 by Dr. Lawrence Berk, an MIT-schooled engineer who happened to also be an accomplished pianist with a burning love of contemporary music. Originally called the Schillinger House of Music, in honor of Dr. Joseph Schillinger (with whom Lawrence Berk studied), the name was changed to Berklee in 1950 after Dr. Berk's son, Lee, was born.

Berk's goal was to provide an alternative to the "traditional" conservatory type of school based on European classical music. Instead, he opted for jazz instruction by actual performers in the field. And while jazz has certainly remained a fundamental element of the curriculum, the school has grown—both figuratively and literally—with the times. When Lee Berk took over as president in 1978, he made it a personal crusade to keep the curriculum vital and reflective of the total music industry. As a result, Berklee College of Music now offers a diversity of subjects unparalleled in the field of music education.

A list of Berklee alumni reads like a veritable "Who's Who" in contemporary music. The percussion list alone is impressive enough: Gary Burton, Tommy Campbell, Terri Lyne Carrington, Vinnie Colaiuta, Al Foster, Jake Hanna, Joe LaBarbera, Harvey Mason, J.R. Robinson, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Steve Smith, and Tony Williams are among the more familiar names. (Burton is now Dean of Curriculum at Berklee, while Campbell is an instructor in the percussion department.) Literally hundreds of not-so-familiar Berklee graduates are filling the drum and percussion chairs in bands, symphony orchestras, studio ensembles, and musical groups of every style and size around the world.

Berklee is a large school, compared to most college or university music departments or music conservatories. The over-

B E R K

all enrollment is around 2,900, with the percussion department numbering between 400 and 450. But while these figures may seem daunting, the variety of programs and courses of study make it possible for a given individual to get more intensive instruction and hands-on playing time than might be possible in many smaller institutions.

Dave Semanca, Assistant Director of Admissions, outlines the basics of the Berklee curriculum: "There are basically two four-year programs at Berklee: the degree program and the diploma program. The degree program is a regular bachelor of music college program. In this program, the student is not only taking music classes, but also academic courses such as English literature, English composition, history of art, western civilization, acoustics, and things like that. In addition, in the degree program, the student also takes what we call 'traditional' music courses like counterpoint, conducting, harmony—the more familiar music courses that you would find anywhere else.

"The diploma program is still a four-year program, but the student simply takes music classes. Depending on what a student's major is, he or she may or may not take some of those traditional music courses. At the end of the four years the student is awarded a professional music diploma, which is a pretty common academic award among music colleges and conservatories.

"Within either of these programs, a student must eventually



Steve Wilkes, percussion instructor and electronic specialist, giving a clinic.

LEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC



Members of the Kainbow band, a top-ranked jazz ensemble, rehearse under the eye of instructor Phil Wilson (right).

declare a major. For example, a student can be a Performance major in either the degree or the diploma program. It's the same in just about any of the other majors, except for Music Education. In the Music Ed curriculum, the student must be a degree candidate. That's due to the multitude of academic classes that he or she is going to be taking, such as psychology, teaching practices, and things like that. Our Music Ed certification is on a reciprocal

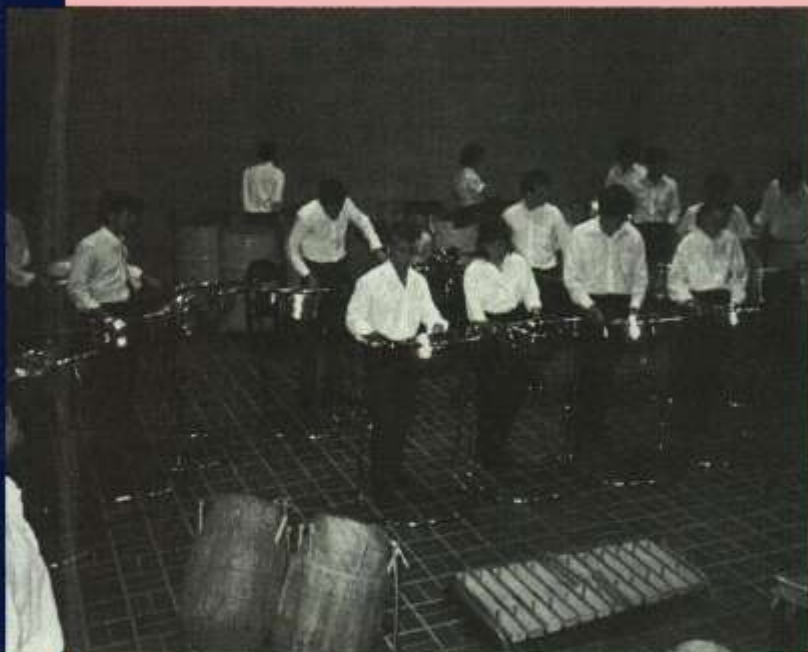
agreement, so basically our graduates are eligible to teach in the public schools in any of the 50 States.

"Students can only enter Berklee on a full-time matriculating basis; they cannot enter part-time. And they don't have too many choices as to what they are going to be doing during the first semester of study here. That's all laid out for the students based on placement exams and on their placement audition. For the most part, everybody takes the same classes during their first year of study here, but on a variety of levels, based on their incoming proficiency."

continued on page 92

Jazz ensemble drummer Jim Black performing in one of Berklee's seven recording facilities (right). John Ramsay, Associate Professor of percussion and a professional jazz drummer, demonstrates a point during a student's private lesson (far right).





Steel Band

Bright lights illuminate a stage filled with percussion equipment and soon the lush, jazzy strains of a special arrangement of Dave Samuels' "Whirlwind" fill the standing-room-only theater. A 20-member percussion ensemble is in full swing, taking the audience with them. During a solo passage by one of the vibists, several of the other players kneel at the front of the stage, enjoying their colleague's performance, heads nodding to the groove of the beat. This is what making music is all about. Where is this concert? Where else? North! Texas.

The University of North Texas (formerly North Texas State University) is located in Denton, about 35 miles north of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. This is one of the best music schools in the country, known for its strong percussion program and famous lab bands. After all, who hasn't heard of the "One O'clock Lab Band"?

There are over 100 percussionists at the music school, dividing themselves into three main areas: Applied Performance, Music Education, and Jazz Studies. The majority of students come from out of state, although the international music scene is also represented by drummers from countries like England, Poland, Germany, Italy, Brazil, and Australia, just to name a few. There are two full-time professors of percussion, Robert Schietroma and Ron Fink. There are also two drumset teachers, Ed Soph and Henry Okstel. (For the past several years, Randy Drake has assisted Ed with the teaching chores.) In addition, there are several adjunct professors (like Doug Howard and Kal Cherry of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra) and several graduate teaching assistants.

Dr. Robert Schietroma is Coordinator of the Percussion Department. He taught at Morehead State University in Kentucky for 12 years before coming to North Texas in 1977. "Doc," as he is known by his students, is the man behind the expansion of the percussion department in recent years. In addition to the basic percussion ensembles, he has added a steel band, a gamelan, and ensembles that specialize in African and tabla drumming. He also oversees the marching drum line, who are four-time National PAS Champions. He compares the atmosphere of North Texas to the momentum of a freight train: "The energy of the music school pulls the students along. Their progress is incredible."

UNIVERSITY

Ron Fink came to Denton in 1964 at the request of Dean Cuthbert. "He wanted to know if I was interested in taking a job that required expertise in drumset and percussion," remembers Ron. "That appealed to me because I enjoyed both areas very much. You have to understand that in those days they were two different areas, unlike today, where everybody pretty much plays a little bit of all of it."

The most recent addition to the faculty is drumset artist Ed Soph, a former student at the school. Upon graduation, he went on the road with Woody Herman, and then with Stan Kenton. Before long, he was in New York doing a great deal of studio work. Now he is getting involved in a more educational aspect of the drumset by returning to North Texas to teach his craft.

"The drumset program here is very comprehensive, covering everything from basic techniques to advanced improvisation in all styles," Ed explains. "The strongest resource we have is the chance to work with the students in conjunction with the many playing opportunities available. There are small groups, an improvisation program, of course the big bands, and then all the percussion ensembles. That's one of the major strengths of the school: It allows ample opportunity for a student to perform, which is the best way to learn. You don't just learn out of books. And this school has very high standards, especially in the jazz and percussion departments. North Texas is one of the few schools I know of that has grown considerably yet managed to maintain a very high caliber of instruction."

The instruction at North Texas follows a very detailed (and successful) procedure. Each incoming student is given a 30-page manual that covers what is expected of him or her, from auditions, to lessons, to practice rooms. It explains the levels of proficiency to be mastered in four areas: snare drum, mallets, timpani, and drumset. (Each student must pass certain "barrier" levels on each instrument before graduation.) Applied Percussion students are required to take at least six semesters of chamber music (percus-



Ed Soph

of NORTH TEXAS

sion ensemble), while Music Education and Jazz Studies students are expected to perform in those same groups for four semesters. And the list goes on and on.

The manual also lists the books that students will be working out of during their different levels of study. They include Cerabino's *Drumset Essentials* and *Latin Beats*, Chaffee's *Volume II Stickings*, Chester's *The New Breed*, Dahlgren's *Drumset Control*, Fink's *Drumset Reading*, Hammond's *Drumset Reading Workbook*, Latham's *Advanced Funk Studies*, and Pickering's *Studio/Jazz Drum Cookbook*. Certain pages in each book are identified as requirements for passing the various proficiency levels.

The audition process, whether it be to enter the school or to attain a position in a performing ensemble, is in itself an invaluable education. "Time and time again," Bob Schietroma says, "my students come back and say that the one thing they really learned how to do here was audition. The competitive auditions here have helped them get incredible jobs out there."

All incoming freshmen and transfer students are required to enroll in a percussion class taught by Dr. Schietroma. "I want to be the first one to see them, not the last one," he explains. "I don't want to wait until students are juniors before I find out their musical expertise. I'm quite frank with them, and our attrition rate is close to 50% in the first year. That's because our program is tough, and if I believe you should not be in the profession, I tell you. They're here because of the reputation of our students, and they need to know what's expected of them. I've noticed that, many times, our juniors are better than some of the graduate students coming in from other schools."

Lessons are divided into 12 assignments per semester, and students are encouraged to split their lesson schedule between two teachers. "They progress much more rapidly," Schietroma reasons. "For example, if I were teaching you snare drum and drumset, we could spend the whole hour on snare drum and never get to the drumset. This would help your snare drum technique, but then you'd be a week behind in drumset. This way, each teacher disregards what you do in the other teacher's lessons, and you spend 30 minutes each week on your prepared lesson."

Jeff Falcone, a junior from Las Vegas who plays in the Three O'clock Lab Band, relates what it's like to study with Ed Soph. "It's great," he exclaims. "He's the best drumset teacher I've ever had. He can pinpoint what it is you're doing wrong and give you four or five exercises to work on to correct it. Sometimes he'll even come into lab band rehearsal to help out with interpretation or style. He teaches you to become a well-rounded musician."

Dan Wojciechowski was the drummer for the One O'clock Lab Band for four semesters between 1985 and 1987. He studied with Henry Okstel for his first three years at UNT. "After an audition, we'd listen to the tape, and Henry would find 500 things to work on!" laughs Dan. "He'd have me listen to a lot of older, big band



Dr. Robert Schietroma



Ron Fink



Randy Drake

styles featuring different drummers. I learned how one figure could be played 300,000 different ways, and that there is no right or wrong way to do it; there are only better or different ways to play a figure. He really helped me to voice figures differently, too. I would think

about how the band would play it. I'm not a drummer, I'm a musician. He got me to think in terms of musical figures instead of rhythmic ones."

Bob Schietroma expands on Dan's concept: "A drumset is a melodic instrument as well as a rhythmic instrument. It's important for drummers to have a thorough knowledge of melodic training, which we do through mallets. It's important for them to hear what's happening musically, tonally, and harmonically, as well as rhythmically."

Randy Drake offers a teacher's perspective on lessons. "It's hard work! We have 40 students per week, and since the lessons are only a half hour, things move real fast. It's nice because the students are very good, and they work hard. Plus they're up on

continued on page 108

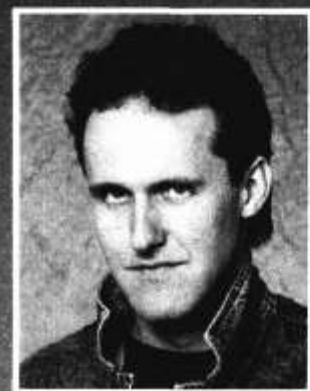
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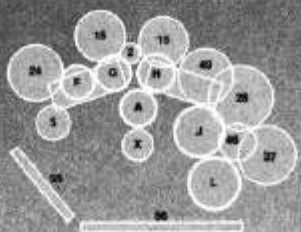

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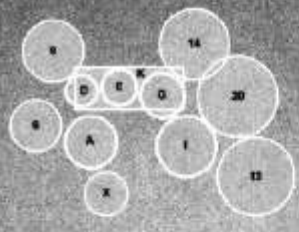
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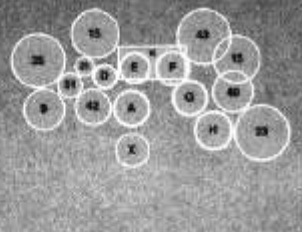
CARL PALMER

... (I choose to play Paiste) because of the variety of change that goes throughout the company... each year there seems to be something new that's happening from a sound point of view... I think (Paiste's) prime consideration is the actual tonal quality, the sound in other words, and from that point of view, I think that musicians will stay with the company...



CHARLIE MORGAN

...the 3000s, which I use are the ideal blend of clarity of sound and also cut... I think a lot of thought has gone into the new ranges of cymbals from drummer feedback... to sum up Paiste cymbals, I think they have a consistency of quality without compromising the nice aspect of the different variations from one cymbal to another...



JEFF PORCARO

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- 12—3000 17" thin crash

- 13—3000 18" china type
- 14—3000 18" crash
- 15—3000 18" power crash
- 16—3000 18" thin crash
- 17—3000 20" flatride
- 18—3000 20" heavy ride
- 19—3000 20" medium ride
- 20—3000 20" power ride
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- 28—2002 22" crash
- 29—2000 COLORSOUND 8" bell & swivel plate
- 30—2000 COLORSOUND 10" bell
- 31—2000 COLORSOUND 12" splash & 15" spock
- 32—2000 COLORSOUND 14" hi-hat & 2002 17" cup chime
- 33—2000 COLORSOUND 15" hi-hat & 11" spock
- 34—2000 COLORSOUND 18" china type w/404 14" hi-hat top inside
- 35—2000 COLORSOUND 18" power crash & 8" cup chime

- 36—2000 COLORSOUND 20" china type w/404 14" hi-hat top inside
- 37—2000 COLORSOUND 20" crash & 2002 17" cup chime & tambourine
- 38—2000 COLORSOUND 20" crash & 20" china type combination
- 39—2000 COLORSOUND 20" novo china type w/505 20" crash below
- 40—2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS 18" crash
- 41—FORMULA 602 13" heavy hi-hat
- 42—FORMULA 602 14" heavy hi-hat
- 43—FORMULA 602 20" medium ride
- 44—SOUND CREATION 18" dark crash & 404 14" hi-hat top stacked

CONTROL TEAM

Russell Kunkel

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Terry Bozzio

PLAYING PAISTE 9 YEARS



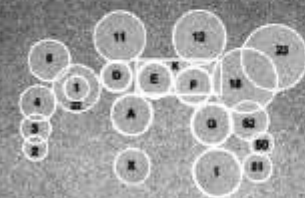
Bill Bruford

PLAYING PAISTE 20 YEARS



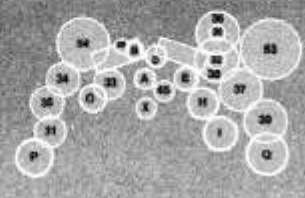
Chad Wackerman

PLAYING PAISTE 6 YEARS



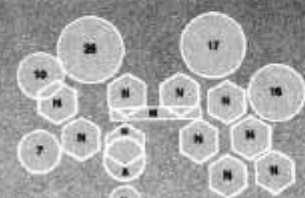
RUSS KUNKEL

...I think we've really come to a new era with the new formulas, I think they're great...the 3000 at present is my favorite...there is a whole company behind it...when I go out on stage or I'm in the studio, it's not just the cymbals I'm playing, I'm representing a whole lot of other people and the time and care that they put into making the cymbals...



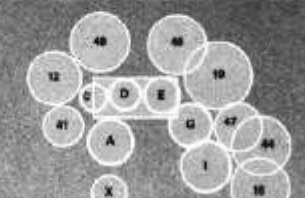
TERRY BOZZIO

...2000 Colorsounds have a lot of low end and I like that...I like that roar...I like my cymbals to obliterate everything else...I like the variety in the different sounds and sizes, the different colors and timbres, and the textures you can get with using all the different products, from gongs to bell cymbals...I mean, what other company makes as many different varieties as Paiste?...



BILL BRUFORD

...I do like the 3000s...I must admit, I think they are very lovely, really lovely...and I have always liked extremities of sound, rather than all-purpose sounds...Paiste doesn't just make cymbals, they also make very weird cymbals, and gongs and things...Paiste just has a much wider range of sound, and I am a sucker for all the weird stuff...



CHAD WACKERMAN

...one of the big reasons, why I like Paiste so much: the frequencies for each cymbal seem not to conflict as much...if you would have a 14" or 16" Crash, they would sound very different, the pitch is very specific, very defined...besides the endorsement, they are my favorite cymbals...having the choice, I would be playing Paiste anyway...I just like their whole catalog of sounds...

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47—RUDE 15" hi-hat
48—RUDE 18" chime
49—COLORSOUND 5 20" power ride
50—506 8" splash
51—505 10" splash
52—505 12" splash
53—SOUND CREATION GONG No. 3 (26")
54—SOUND CREATION GONG No. 6 (24")
55—SYMPHONIC GONG 30"
56—SYMPHONIC GONG 60"

DRUMS & OTHER INSTRUMENTS

A—14" snare drum
B—8" tom tom
C—9" tom tom
D—10" tom tom
E—12" tom tom
F—13" tom tom
G—14" tom tom
H—15" tom tom
I—16" tom tom
J—18" tom tom
K—22" bass drum
L—20" bass drum on stand

M—electronic bass drum pad
N—electronic pad
O—13" spoke hi-hat
P—13" & 17" spoke
Q—19" inverted spoke & 9" spoke
X—drum throne

The statements in this ad are based on interviews conducted with the artists on their playing, cymbals, sounds, and on Paiste. Write to us at Paiste America, 460 Atlas St., Brea, CA, 92621, and ask for the ones you'd like. Mention Dept. USA2. Please include \$3 for printing, postage and handling.

What's In A Note: Part 1



Photo by Rick Malkin

MUSIC KEY



Understanding notes, their values, and their mathematical relationship to each other is of extreme importance to a musician. Drumming quite often involves split-second decision making, especially when playing an extemporaneous solo or fill. The following examples present five of the most common notes. Play each of them using a quarter-note pulse either on a metronome or by tapping your

foot. (This is indicated under each of the rhythms, on the first space of each exercise.)

Quarter Notes



8th Notes



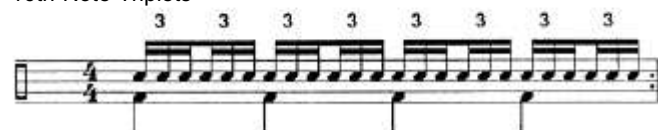
8th-Note Triplets



16th Notes



16th-Note Triplets



Now, without playing, try to hear each of these examples in your head. At any given moment—anywhere, anytime—you should be able to *hear* as well as play quarter notes, 8th notes, 8th-note triplets, 16th notes, and 16th-note triplets.

Let's take these five different note values and combine them into a 16-measure exercise. First play it, and then try to hear it (that is, play it in your head).



To make things more challenging, in the next example each of the different note groups lasts for only two beats.



In this final example, each of the note groups lasts for only one beat. This means that each quarter-note pulse must be divided into different numbers of evenly spaced notes: either one, two, three, four, or six.



Remember, your goal is to become so familiar with quarter notes, 8th notes, 8th-note triplets, 16th notes, and 16th-note triplets that you can play and hear these figures in any combination, at a split second's notice. If these exercises seem relatively simple at first glance, stay tuned, because I'll be making things more challenging in my next column.



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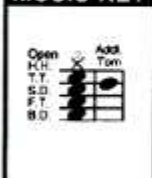
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Building Blocks Of Rock

MUSIC KEY

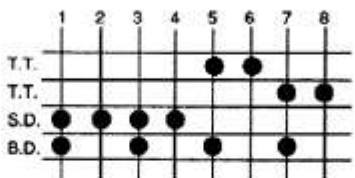
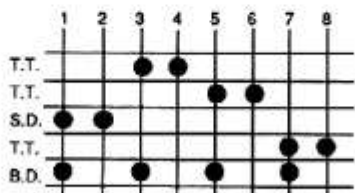


In past programming articles, I've dealt with ways in which your drum machine can be persuaded to emulate certain musical styles. While these individual patterns provide a reasonable approximation of the output of a "real drummer," they offer no provision for the natural improvisation that occurs when you sit behind a kit.

Playing along with a group of good musicians, the good modern drummer will instinctively add fills throughout a piece that highlight principal chord changes and transitions from verses to choruses, etc. Drum machines aren't human, but they can be programmed to react in a similar way, and it is this aspect that I want to concentrate on this month.

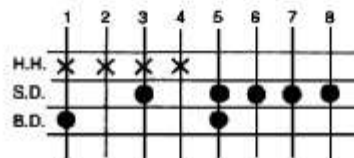
Song Structure

It can sound boring if the same single-bar rhythm pattern is repeated over and over again to provide a complete rhythm track. It is far better to punctuate this percussive bed with intelligently placed fills. Patterns 1 and 2 are a couple to start you off, and should be programmed with your machine set to quantize 8th notes.



These are known as 8th-note based fills, and although useful, do lack the speed and drive of 16th-note ones that most kit drummers instinctively play. However, they are simple to program and make an ideal starting point for our short study. There are, broadly speaking, two different types of fills: one that lasts for a whole bar, and one that only lasts for a half bar. The half-bar fill is connected

to a portion of a conventional rhythm pattern, as in pattern 3:

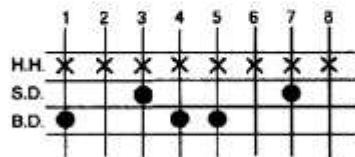


Fill Positioning

Now we can begin to look more closely at effective positioning within a song track. Much modern music owes a great deal to blues, and one particular progression, the 12-bar, is one that frequently occurs in many different contemporary styles. Obviously there are variations, and not all songs follow the same format. However, it does make a good basis for percussion study. From a pitched instrument's standpoint, such a progression (given here in the key of C) would look like this: C, C, C, C7; F, F, C, C; G, F, C, G7. Each chord represents one bar. The fundamental chord changes occur on the fourth and twelfth bars, which are highlighted by the use of dominant seventh chords. It is during these bars that the drummer should insert fills.

To construct a rhythm track such as this, you ideally require a drum machine that has a facility known as track or song mode. This will enable many different patterns to be individually programmed into selected memory locations, and then chained together in a user-definable way to create the percussion track for a complete song. If your machine is not equipped with this facility, all is not lost. You can simply switch across to the fills manually at the required bar, and back again. Most machines will finish the pattern that they are replaying before moving on to the next selected one. Thus, you can switch patterns in advance of the changeover, and likewise switch back again. (It's easier than it sounds.)

Try programming a 12-bar progression now. First off, choose a suitable basic rock rhythm; use pattern 4 if you can't think of anything yourself:



Set your machine up in song mode using your dedicated user manual and, assuming that you have programmed the early part of this chapter into memory locations 1 through 4, proceed as follows: 04, 04, 04, 03; 04, 04, 04; 04, 04, 04, 02.

It's always best to arrange for a half-bar fill to appear on the fourth bar, and a full-bar fill to appear on the twelfth bar. After successfully loading this sequence into your machine, use the repeat function to continually cycle through instead of programming it several times; this saves memory. If you have a guitar/keyboard/bass available, try playing along. It'll give you a much better understanding of what's going on.

16th-Note Fills

Now you can try substituting the following fills for the ones that you've just programmed. They are more akin to what you would expect from a kit drummer. This time you will need to quantize your machine to accept 16th-note input. If you're a kit drummer yourself, then why not attempt programming these in real time mode, tapping the pads of the drum machine in the same way as you would play a rhythm?

5

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
H.H.	X		X		X		X									
T.T.																
S.D.					●				●	●	●	●		●	●	
T.T.															●	●
B.D.	●		●						●				●			

6

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Open H.H.							X									
H.H.	X		X		X											
T.T.													●	●	●	
S.D.					●				●	●	●	●		●	●	
T.T.															●	●
B.D.	●		●	●					●				●			

7

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
H.H.	X		X													
T.T.									●	●	●	●				
S.D.					●	●	●	●								
T.T.													●	●	●	●
B.D.	●		●						●							

8

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
H.H.	X		X		X		X									
S.D.									●	●	●	●	●			
B.D.	●		●						●							

9

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
H.H.	X		X		X		X									
T.T.													●			
S.D.									●	●	●	●		●	●	
B.D.	●		●						●			●				

10

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
H.H.	X		X		X		X									
T.T.													●	●	●	
S.D.									●	●	●	●				
B.D.	●		●						●							

11

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
H.H.	X		X		X		X									
T.T.									●	●	●					
S.D.					●				●							
T.T.													●	●	●	●
B.D.	●		●	●					●							





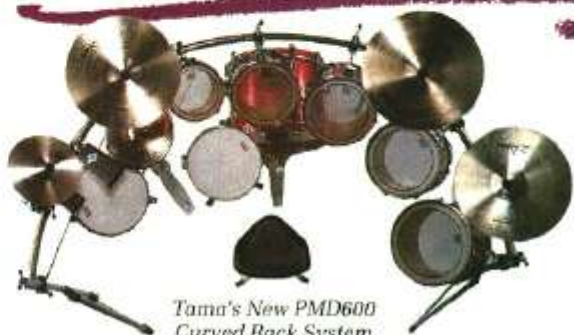
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Mousey Alexander:

Mousey Alexander is a fine drummer first and foremost, and has been for a good many years. But at this stage in his life, in addition to playing, Mousey gets the greatest amount of satisfaction from presenting clinics—not the type of clinics we drummers normally relate to, but clinics for victims of strokes and heart attacks. He does it to show people who've had their lives affected by these debilitating illnesses how



those deals that came with free lessons. I went to the first lesson, and the teacher was all bent over and walked with a limp. That scared me half to death! Was that what I would look like if I played drums for years? It turned out that the guy was a circus drummer, and he had great chops. He really taught me a lot, and I stayed with him until the war came along."

After the service, Mousey enrolled in the Roy Knapp School of Drumming in Chicago, and soon began to work around the Chicago area. A fellow musician recommended him to Jimmy and Marion McPartland, and he joined their band at Chicago's Blue Note. He stayed with the McPartlands until 1950, when Marion left for New York to work the famed Hickory House.

"Marion kept writing and asking me to come to New York, but I was scared. I was married by then, and I had two kids. It was a big move, but I finally decided to do it. I played from 10:00 PM until 4:00 AM, and then worked at a bakery from 11:00 in the morning to 7:00 at night. I did that for six months to save money for the trip.

"A bass player named Bob Peterson and I made the trip together. What a trip! The car kept breaking down. By the time we reached the Holland Tunnel in Jersey, we had \$5.00 between us. Then, just outside the tunnel, a tire blew and we got hit for \$4.50 for a tube. That left us with 50CENTS to our name! Well, we drove straight to the Hickory House, and borrowed money from Marion for food and a room.

"Fortunately, I went to work with Marion the very next night at the Hickory House.

What a place that was! All the top musicians would hang out there—especially the drummers. Guys like Roy Haynes, Don Lamond, and Joe Morello would come in all the time. After a year, I left Marion to join the newly-formed Sauter-Finegan Orchestra.

"I joined up with the band in Buffalo for a concert, and I was terrified. Here I was in the middle of a 24-piece band with two percussionists—Buster Bailey from the New York Philharmonic, and the great Walter Rosenberger. Eddie Sauter and Bill Finegan had sent me some charts, along with the band's album, and I really thought I had it covered. But when I sat down to play, I kind of froze. Finally, Bill and Eddie said to put the music away and just watch them. I did exactly that, and we ended up bringing the house down. I stayed on that band for three years. We did a 16-week TV show where I met a lot of really big stars. Sinatra used to hang with the band when we played the Crescendo in Los Angeles.

"After that, I went with guitarist Johnny Smith for two years, and then I joined Benny Goodman's band. Back then, *The Benny Goodman Story* was just coming out, so it was first class for the band all the way. We opened at the Empire Room in New York in connection with the movie. Ludwig sent me two brand-new sets: a black one to use with the trio out front, and a white one back with the band. We had a ball that night.

"I went with Charlie Ventura for a while, and I finally settled in New York. I began to get a lot of calls for record dates and jingles,

they can make it back—provided they're willing to really try. Mousey Alexander's story is one overflowing with ups and downs: a career sparkling with memorable playing highlights, yet filled with what many might easily consider more than one person's fair share of adversity. Mousey has faced problems that would surely test the will of any man.

"People really have no idea what it's like to go through what I went through," says a pensive Mousey. "That's why I do the clinics. Maybe people who hear my story will pick up a little inspiration, work a little harder to recover, and, most importantly, refuse to give up."

Mousey's story begins in Gary, Indiana, in 1922. "My dad played a little banjo, but I really wasn't into music that much when I was growing up. Then, Dad took me to hear a drum & bugle corps, and I really liked the drums. At Christmastime that year, he bought me a set of drums. It was one of

The early days in Chicago with jimmy and Marion McPartland.



Profile In Courage

by Russ Lewellen

and I started making some really good money. But I was killing myself for it. You see, I was also working at the Half Note with the house band. There were many nights I'd get home at 4:00 AM, and get back up at 7:00 for a date at 9:00. During the late '60s and early '70s I was getting about 400 recording dates a year.

"I'd also go out on tour every now and then. I did a lot of things with Clark Terry, and with Paul Anka. Later, I toured Europe with Sy Oliver, and I did a two-week thing with Doc Severinson. I was really working like a madman.

"In July of '73, I woke up in the middle of the night with a pain in my arm. I figured I was just playing too much, so I went back to sleep. But by morning the pain got worse, so my wife drove me to the hospital. I'd had a mild heart attack. Well, I was the world's worst patient. I was supposed to stay in the hospital at least 21 days, but I only lasted ten. I was home two weeks, and then I had another attack.

"Everything went okay for the next few years. But in 1976, I suffered another bad heart attack that did some damage to the heart. When the doctor found out I'd gone back to my old ways, he really lashed into me. He said that if I didn't straighten out fast, I'd die! Well, I did take it easy for a while, but in December of that year I was back playing full time with Zoot Sims.

"In 1980, I got the chance to fulfill a lifelong dream, by putting a big band of my own together. We were playing at a new club on Long Island, and things were really going great. But in August of that year, I was rushed to the hospital with what turned out to be a series of mini-strokes. The *real* thing hit early in the morning. As a result, I was completely paralyzed on my right side. The doctors doubted if I'd ever regain the full use of my right side.

"I went through the worst period of my life when I came home from the hospital. I would lay in bed and cry all the time. You see, playing was my whole life, and now it was all gone. I couldn't even stand to listen to music. The doctors told me that many stroke victims just give up. And when they do, the tendons draw up, and the joints freeze. Well, finally I just made up my mind that I was *not* going to give up without a fight!

"I started out by just lifting my dead right hand up over my head, and letting it fall on the pillow. I did this over and over again. Then one of my therapists sat me down at a table and put four cotton balls and a paper cup in front of me. I had to pick up each cotton ball and put it in the cup. I worked at it every day, and finally, the hand began



Mousey with the Benny Goodman band.

to move. First an inch, then two, and then I finally made it to the cotton ball. I'd put one ball in the cup, then another—day after day, hour after hour. In six weeks, I had all four cotton balls in the cup.

"Then I managed to unclench my right hand enough to insert a drumstick. It had been frozen like a claw. I worked for 12 hours a day until I could manage to play a stroke on the practice pad. I should also mention that I had a great deal of help from a protege of Louie Bellson's named Alan Dale, who would drive up almost every weekend to work with me.

"I also began to work on my right foot. First one toe moved, and then another. Within a couple of months, I managed to drag myself across the room with the help of a leg brace. I started trying to lift things. At first it was only a jar of jam, but then I could lift heavier objects. I switched to metal sticks that weighed about a pound each. I also squeezed a small rubber ball, and tossed it from hand to hand.

"Then, of course, there was the mental strain of the whole thing. I had no income for almost three years. We lost everything—our house, our investments, and our savings. Then Eddie Tone, a bass player friend of mine, ran a benefit for me on Long Island. That was a night to remember. Everyone was there. Even Buddy took a cab all the way out from the city just to play that night. They raised over \$11,000. It's something I'll never forget.

"One year after the benefit, I had an-

other massive heart attack. This time, four arteries were closed, so I was scheduled for a bypass operation. The night before my surgery, I had *another* massive attack, and my heart literally stopped beating. I spent the next ten days hooked up to a heart machine. They finally performed the quadruple bypass almost eight weeks later, after I'd regained some of my strength. But believe it or not, I managed to return to playing on a limited basis even after all that. Unfortunately, it wasn't over for me yet. I was at the Sarasota Jazz Festival in '86 when I had still another heart attack. Four arteries were closed again, so I had to undergo another quadruple bypass."

Sitting back, Mousey reflects on a series of events that would easily have made a less determined individual throw in the towel. "Hey, I really wanted to give up a lot of times. No one will ever know how hard it was to keep going. To be rendered so terribly helpless after a playing career like mine wasn't easy to deal with, by any means. But you see, I'm a *fighter*. And that's the main reason I do the clinics. I truly feel that if I can get just one heart attack or stroke victim to make a serious effort to recover, then I've really accomplished something. I can tell it by the look in their eyes when they hear my story—and especially when they hear me play. Man, I'll tell you, that's what really makes it *all* worthwhile."

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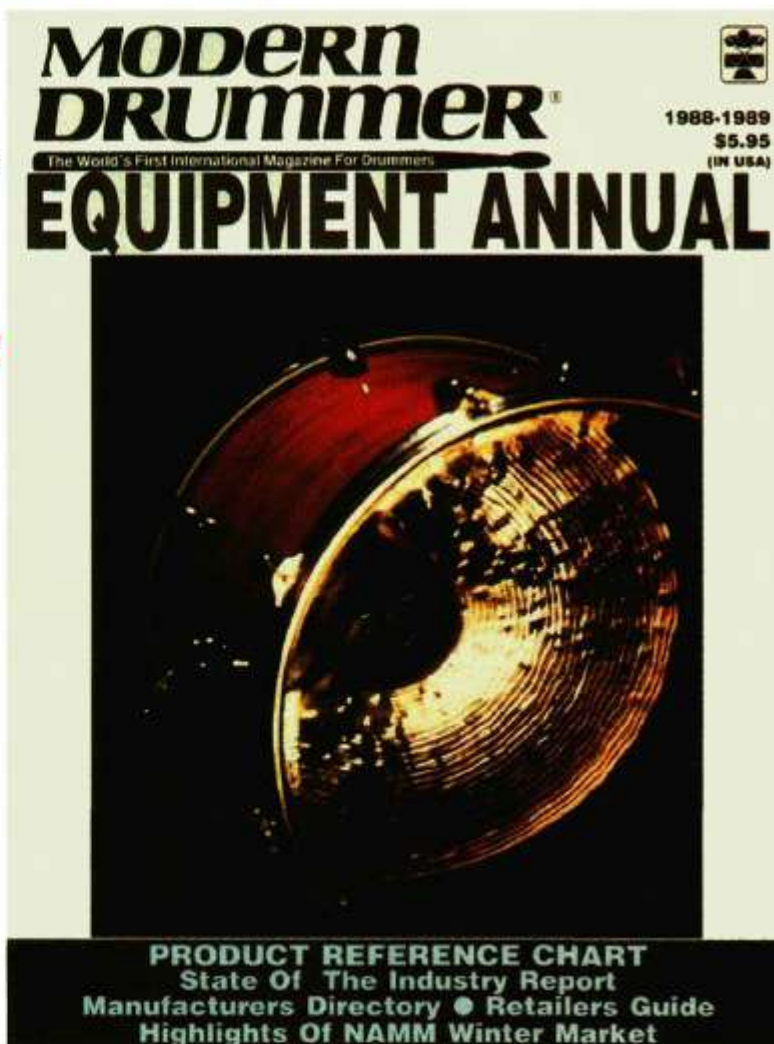
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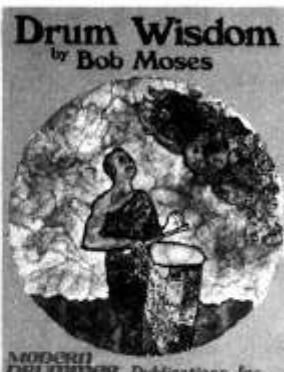
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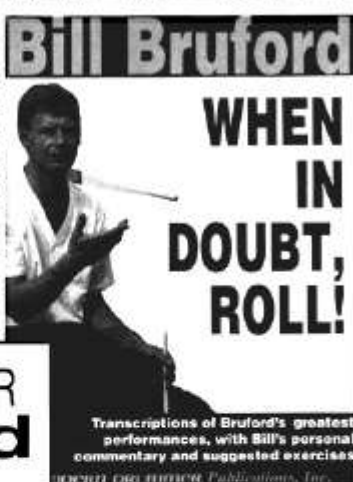


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Solo Intros

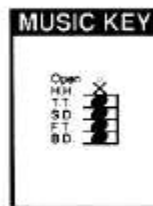


Photo by Rick Mattingly

Harvey Mason

This month's *Drum Soloist* features the drum-solo introductions to three different tunes. Each of these tunes is in a different feel. The first solo intro, which is in a funk feel, is by Harvey Mason. The song is "Ragtown," from Wilbert Longmuire's album *Champagne*.



Vinnie Colaiuta

The next solo intro is to a song called "Too Hip For The Room," which is off of a Pat Williams album entitled *Dreams & Themes*. On this track, which is a rock shuffle, Vinnie Colaiuta grooves hard and plays a few tasty licks. In the intro, the hi-hat is played slightly open.

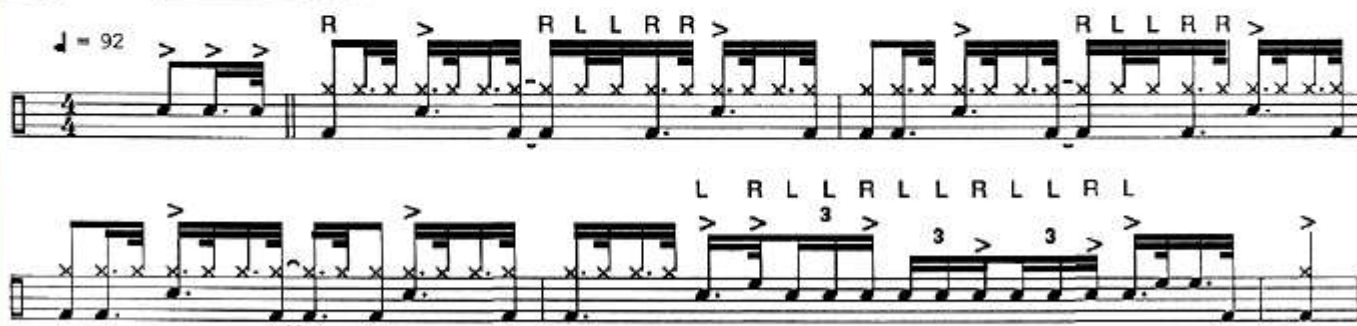




Photo by Lissa Wales

Gerry Brown

The third solo intro is by Gerry Brown, who plays this Latin-tinged intro to the song "The Dancer," from Stanley Clarke's *School Days* album.



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The Headphone Mix

Most engineers and producers will want to hear the bass and drums before they bring up the rest of the instruments on the console. In order for the two of you to play something together, you must be able to *hear one* another, which brings up the subject of headphones.

The balances of the instruments in the phones can be very critical in getting a track to groove with the right feel. Often-times, what you hear will determine what you play. Jim Keltner has said, "The headphones and cue system can change the way you play. You have to check out a playback in the booth to see if everything is working together. Sometimes I find that I could be playing a little more, but what I heard in the phones led me to believe that I was getting in the way."

The cue system, monitors, type of headphones, and the mix are vitally important in getting a great track. And yet, at so many otherwise excellent studios, the phones seem to be an afterthought. Sometimes I wish that engineers and producers were

forced to wear phones during tracking, just to experience what musicians go through.

I recently did a project at the Sound Stage in Nashville. The unique studio design had no wall between the studio and the booth. The engineer and producer *had* to wear phones to listen to the band, since the speakers would have bled into the open mic's. To say the least, the phones' mixes were the best I've ever heard. A lot of time and care went into getting a great mix, and the whole system was excellent.

Some engineers don't put the drums in the phones while we're getting a drum sound. I guess they feel the constant turning on and off of mic's and popping equalizers in and out could be distracting. The fact is, I don't find it distracting at all. I like to know what they're working on; it makes the whole process less mysterious. It also facilitates working out problems with the kit, should they arise. Since I have to wear phones to hear the engineer and producer anyway, I might as well hear my drums. I'll usually ask engineers to please put my drums in the phones. Sometimes they will obligingly, but quite often my request is ignored. You just have to go along with it.

After the drum and bass sounds are up, they'll usually move on to the rest of the band, and finally to the lead and background vocals. You generally won't have to play along as each section is added. However, there *is* a whole school of engineering that holds the opposite to be true. These people want to hear how the track is being built, and they'll have the band play again and again while they bring each new instrument up on the console. This is a method I've gotten used to, and actually I find it very logical. But it can definitely be tiring on you as a drummer since you're the first one up. Again, you have to go along with it and learn to pace yourself. One of the side benefits, however, is that the phone mix can be worked on simultaneously.

Each set of headphones is normally plugged into its own box, with a volume control and switches for the desired cue mix. Most systems are stereo, with at least two separate mixes. Sometimes more are desirable, especially if you need tons of click and you don't want to drive the other players bananas! A few studios use a system that allows each musician to have his or her own mixing panel for the phone mix. This can be a joy for experienced musicians, but in the wrong hands, it can prove disastrous.

For example, I once did an album at a

studio using such a system, with an inexperienced recording artist who happened to be the guitar player. Well, we struggled through the takes on the first day. The bass player and I couldn't believe how bad this guy's time was. He was definitely in another zone! We continually asked him if he had enough of us in his phones, and he kept assuring us that he did. So, we struggled on. The next day, I put his phones on before he arrived at the studio. What I found was the most exaggerated case of "more me" in the phones that I had ever heard. Of course he couldn't play with us; *he couldn't hear us!* It sounded like a guitar solo with the amp on 12. Needless to say, the producer had to have a talk with his artist.

At the Sound Stage, they also use individual phone mix consoles. However, the *whole basic mix* is brought up properly on the first two faders. The remaining six or eight faders are used for what they really do call "more me." This is especially helpful for the hard-to-hear instruments like acoustic guitar and piano. It's also great for a singer who can add echo or effect by bringing up that assigned fader.

You'll run into a variety of brands of headphones. It seems that AKG appears the most. They make both an open and closed set. I always ask for closed phones that completely cup the ear. A drummer always hears so much from the drums themselves that closed phones are almost a necessity to hear the rest of the band. Also, closed phones tend to stay on your head a lot better, particularly since drummers seem to move around more than other musicians.

You really can't become too fanatical about your phones and the mix. But if you're really having trouble hearing and playing, by all means *speak up!* One of the fastest ways to correct the situation is to ask the producer or engineer to put on a pair of phones and work with the mix for a second. That may seem obvious, but so many first and second engineers just keep adding things, without ever really putting on the phones and giving the mix a good listen.

As with so many other things that occur in recording, phone mixes call for lots of give and take. Just remember, the artist and musicians are all there for one singular purpose, and that is to end up with a great track. But everyone has to be fairly happy for this to occur. Your conception of a good phone mix might not be the same as the guitar player's. Try to work it out. And always watch out for the "more me" syndrome!



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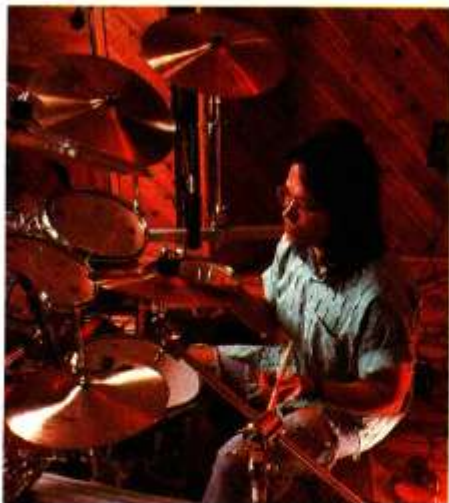
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biggest influences were Paul Humphrey, Ed Greene, Earl Palmer, and the godfather of that 16TH-note groove, James Gadsen. That "Georgie Porgie" groove I owe to them.

RF: Would you explain that groove?

JP: It's the groove on "Lowdown," just a different lift of it maybe, a different tempo. I stole all those grooves from those guys, but I may lay the beat just a little bit differently, depending on the song.

RF: Like "99."

JP: Right, "99" is from that same genre. It's my R&B chops that I got from those people.

RF: "Dirty Laundry" (Don Henley).

JP: "Dirty Laundry" is just me laying it. It was an electronic track, meaning it was

sequenced; that Farfisa organ part is a sequence going down, so I was just bashing. I played 1 on the bass drum, 2 and 4 on the snare drum. I'm just pounding. It's just a groove.

RF: How did it come to you?

JP: If you took the drums out and listened to it, there would be nothing else you could play to that song except that groove. Nothing else fits. Because of the machine, the tempo is dictated, the dynamics, and what the song is about, dirty laundry. It's an attitude thing. The backbeat was obviously laid back as far as I could lay the sucker back, and I hit as hard as I could hit.

RF: "Africa" (Toto).

JP: I was about 11 when the New York World's Fair took place, and I went to the African pavillion with my family. I saw the real thing; I don't know what tribe, but there were these drummers playing, and my mind was blown. The thing that blew my mind was that everybody was playing one part. As a little kid in Connecticut, I would see these Puerto Rican and Cuban cats jamming in the park. It was the first time I witnessed somebody playing one beat and not straying from it, like a religious experience, where it gets loud, and everyone goes into a trance. I have always dug those kind of orchestras, whether it be a band or all drummers. But I just love a bunch of guys saying one thing. That's why I loved marching band, and I said, "Gee, someday there's going to be a little drum

orchestra where everybody plays one thing, and you don't ever stray from it. You do it until you drop. You're banished from that land if you move from that one part."

So when we were doing "Africa," I set up a bass drum, snare drum, and a hi-hat, and Lenny Castro set up right in front of me with a conga. We looked at each other and just started playing the basic groove—the bass drum on 1, the & of 2, and 3. The backbeat is on 3, so it's a half-time feel, and it's 16th notes on the hi-hat. Lenny started playing a conga pattern. We played for five minutes on tape, no click, no nothing. We just played. And I was singing the bass line for "Africa" in my mind, so we had a relative tempo. Lenny and I went into the booth and listened back to the five minutes of that same boring pattern. We picked out the best two bars that we thought were grooving, and we marked those two bars on tape. We made another mark four bars before those two bars. Lenny and I went back out; I had a cowbell, Lenny had a shaker. They gave us two new tracks, and they gave us the cue when they saw the first mark go by. Lenny and I started playing to get into the groove, so by the time that fifth bar came—which was the first bar of the two bars we marked as the cool bars we liked—we were locked, and we over-dubbed shaker and cowbell. So there was bass drum, snare drum, hi-hat, two congas, a cowbell, and a shaker. We went back in, cut the tape, and made a one-bar tape loop that went 'round and 'round and 'round. The Linn machine was available to us. Maybe it would have taken two minutes to program that in the Linn, and it took about half an hour to do this. But a Linn machine doesn't feel like that! So we had an analog groove.

We took that tape, transferred it onto another 24-track for six minutes, and David Paich and I went out in the studio. The song started, and I was sitting there with a complete drumset, and Paich was playing. When he got to the fill before the chorus, I started playing the chorus, and when the verse or the intro came back, I stopped playing. Then we had piano and drums on tape. You have to realize that there are some odd bars in "Africa," so when you have a one-bar loop going, all of a sudden, sometimes Lenny's figure would turn around. So Lenny went in and played the song again, but this time he changed his pattern a little for the turn-arounds, for the fills, for the bridge, for the solo. We kept his original part and the new one. Then we had to do bongos, jingle sticks, and big shakers doing quarter notes, maybe stacking two tracks of sleigh bells, two tracks of big jingle sticks, and two tracks of tambourines all down to one track. I was trying to get the sounds I would hear Milt Holland or Emil Richards have, or the sounds I would hear in a *National Geographic* special, or the ones I heard at the New York World's Fair.

RF: "Good For You" (Toto).

JP: That's just a rock 'n' roll thing.

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RF: There's a great drum break in the middle of the song.

JP: Just that weird-feeling fill—that's all it is. I can't recall what it is. The reason it's a weird-feeling fill is because it was one of those spontaneous things; what you hear on that record is the first time I ever played that fill.

RF: You don't have a problem with weird-feeling fills.

JP: The reason I don't have a problem is, first of all, they're weird-feeling because I tried to do something else and I failed, but yet something came out that still was sort of in time. If you listen to it, that fill is rushing. After I learned that fill and I had to play it live, there are live tapes where the fill was even hipper because it layed where it was supposed to lay. Sometimes something good comes from an accident or going for something.

RF: The Clapton song, "Forever Man."

JP: "Forever Man" is the kind of drumming I stole from Jim Gordon and Jim Keltner. It's a very bad example of what you'd hear on those Tulsa rock 'n' roll type tracks, like the Leon Russell or Delaney & Bonnie type grooves Gordon, Keltner, and Chuck Blackwell would play.

RF: "Pamela" (Toto).

JP: I immediately thought of Stevie Wonder doing "Sir Duke." That's a "Sir Duke" groove; Bernard Purdie did that groove.

RF: Let's talk about your approach to ballads. I love the feel to songs like "I Won't Hold You Back" and "Anna."

JP: My ballad playing is me emulating Jim Keltner, and all I think about is Jim Keltner, Jim Keltner, Jim Keltner, Jim Keltner. Since I was 16 years old, I've had a vivid picture of Jim Keltner sitting at a set of drums on my right. I think of relaxing the groove so that there's space. I like space in ballads. And sometimes I like those long, open fills I stole from Ringo Starr and Jim Keltner. Drummers have to be sensitive to the song, the dynamics. Toto's ballads happen to give you a lot of dynamics. You can get out there and still stay open.

RF: When you play the Baked Potato, you really let go. Most people don't ever get to hear you play like that.

JP: It's because I'm allowed to play like that, because it's a small club and I'm amongst my friends. A lot of drummers come by the Baked Potato, and they're guys like Sonny Emory, who I'll meet for the first time. I'll say, "Sonny, play a song." He plays and I think, "Oh shit, I can never go up there again." When I play there, I try to get off some chops; it's my one opportunity to get off stuff I don't normally have an opportunity to do. I realized, though, that when I do it, I'm holding back solos sometimes. You might not think so, but I know when somebody gets into an outside thing where don't have the facility to be real free. I'm tight and nervous, playing too loud and too fast. People don't see me do a lot of that because I'm not really good at it. I don't get called to do that a lot. There are better guys at that than me—guys who are much more musical than me on a broad area. It's a hard thing to explain. I got called by Zappa to do a couple of albums, and I would not take the gig; I would blow the sessions, he'd be pissed, and he'd never call again. When I've heard the material and seen charts, there is stuff that I just can't do. I can't do stuff that Bozzio or Vinnie can do.

RF: The feeling I get when I see you play the Potato, though, is that there is a whole lot of you that is being repressed. I don't think I've ever seen you miss what you were going for.

JP: But I have. I can smooth out a screw-up real cleverly.

RF: You must do it *real* cleverly.

JP: I do. You have to learn how to do that. When someone goes off into an over-the-bar thing and it's a great figure, I'll hear Vinnie immediately; his ears catch on to it, and he has the facility—the motor sense from the mind, to the muscle, to the technique—to go bam, just like reading a word. I don't, so I'll go for something, and I know from my first 16th note that I've screwed up. I'll cover it with something, and someone might say, "Gee, that's exciting," but it's simple, it'll get me out of there, and I don't mess up the time. But I'm sitting there frustrated as hell, and my arms are real stiff because my nervous system goes nuts when I go for something where I'm thinking so much. So I'm playing that uptempo samba that I don't have the chops for, and I'm struggling. People see me smiling and

sweating, and they think I'm having the best time of my life, but actually I'm going through terrors up there. My right hand, man, I'm holding the stick so tight and going, "Please don't cramp, because if you cramp, I can't play for two weeks, and man, I'd better start practicing again." All that stuff goes through my mind. Sometimes I have no business being up there, for that particular band. Maybe there's an in-between where I don't have to get into that outside stuff. There's stuff that I do play that I think is exciting, which isn't mainstream stuff, but it also isn't fusion.

RF: You're not Vinnie Colaiuta, but you're a different drummer.

JP: I know that, and I respect myself for what I am, believe me.

RF: It's all a matter of personal preference. Maybe the people who are slayed by Vinnie aren't the ones who would be slayed by you, but obviously there are people who would prefer to listen to you.

JP: I thank people for that, and I know that's true, but when people say, "Man, Jeff, go for it. You've got time, you've got groove, you can do things those guys do. Just woodshed, and don't be lazy," well, I'd rather paint. Plus, I'm close to what those guys feel like as human beings—what they feel like spiritually and artistically—and if I could play like Vinnie, I would not be able to not use those chops. I know people who don't like drummers because they think they're too busy. If I had those chops, I would use them. It's impossible for Sonny Emory or Gerry Brown not to use them. I know if I had the chops they have how frustrating it would be to do sessions.

RF: My original point was that there is a whole side of you that very few people get to see, and I've thought to myself that you must feel awfully repressed doing sessions.

JP: Not at all. On some sessions I do—and you may not hear them—I get to play that kind of stuff.

RF: Like what?

JP: Lots of instrumental stuff that's released in Japan. I thought on albums like *Katy Lied* I did somewhat that kind of stuff. I have not been frustrated or felt held back from anything I've wanted to do. Believe me. Not yet. I'd love to have more time for the Baked Potato type gigs—live gigs where I'd just play and not be under pressure, having fun.

RF: Your dad recently said that what you played in the beginning was hipper than what you play today. What did he mean by that?

JP: I don't know. Maybe he personally liked what I played when I was younger more than what I play now.

RF: Do you agree? Were you more adventurous then?

JP: I really don't know. I might have been more adventurous with the kind of music I was playing at the time. But I think I can look at some stuff I played back then and disagree with that. Maybe some people haven't heard all the stuff I've played over the years. Maybe people who only heard

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me do Steely Dan stuff ten years ago think that's a lot hipper than stuff I do now, but maybe they haven't heard all the stuff I've done now.

RF: I assumed your father would have heard most of it, though.

JP: My father? He's maybe heard one tenth of everything I've ever done. He doesn't buy pop records, and I don't go around to his house saying, "Daddy, listen to what I played on." But I think my dad said what I've been trying to tell everybody for years: I'm just a street drummer. My father heard me play with Sonny & Cher more than he heard me play with anybody. Maybe he's talking about what I played when I was a really young kid, back in the Jack Dougherty days—that first album I did that was like a big band that I did with Keltner. We played uptempo sambas and stuff like that, so maybe he thought I'd be some great bebop jazz fusion drummer or something.

RF: Let's talk about the studio. I would like to detail everybody's function in that situation, and how it relates to you and affects you as a drummer. First, the producer.

JP: There are many kinds of producers. I think the best way to do it is give examples of different people. Say the producer is Gary Katz. He is the kind of producer who knows his artist real well, and works for the artist. He also knows the musicians, and he knows the artists' music so well that he knows who is best suited for the session. As a producer he has his set ways of doing records, but his set ways are many different ways—whatever works best. He's the kind of producer who has natural ears and can tell you things aren't feeling as good as they should be or there's something wrong, and make those suggestions in a very non-threatening way, and be very complimentary and understanding. And that's the Gary Katz kind of producer.

RF: Considering that Steely Dan puts a drummer through hell, that's quite interesting.

JP: We're talking about the producer. [laughs] Let's take a Richard Perry. Richard Perry is very well-versed in music and has a very good musical background. He is a musician and a singer. Richard's sessions may rely on having an arranger there, and Richard does a lot of big hit records, so a drummer may get a lot of very set dictation from him.

People like Quincy Jones do more pre-production on the master tape, meaning they will put the tracks together with great drum machine sounds and sometimes with nice involved drum programs also. They already have set in their minds the beat they want. Most of the time, I don't even know why they hire a drummer, but if they do hire a drummer, they're going to want the guy to duplicate what the drum machine is doing. Sometimes Q will have a rhythm section thing. It depends on the project that a versatile guy like Quincy is doing.

Then there are producers who I call "figurehead" producers. They should be ex-

ecutive producers. They may be there in the studio, but they're leaving it mainly up to the arranger, the artist, or whoever. Sometimes you find the producer to be one of the guys. If it's a five-member band, he's the sixth member. They work with the band, they're very helpful, and they're musicians, too. And a producer may be different according to the project, because the artist may be more dominating as far as what he wants, and rightfully so—not that the producer doesn't have the same talent, but maybe the producer is just there to help and oversee.

RF: The engineer.

JP: For drummers, the engineer is important. A lot of them have their own different thing. They all have special mic's they like to use, some have certain studios they like, some have certain consoles. Some engineers might be very good, but they might be very set in their ways: "This is the only way I get drum sounds." There are certain engineers I work for who even have snare drums: "This is my snare drum." Some of the drums may sound great, and there may be something special about them, but there's always the size stick and who's hitting it. You may use the same mic', with the same EQ, have your same level, record in the same room, and it's still going to sound different. There are engineers who don't like tom-toms. I remember when the Simmons first came out, there was a particular engineer who just loved them because, "Man, it takes so long to get tom sounds, but with Simmons, I just have to throw it up and it's there." You also have engineers who are only used to a dead room. If you put them in a live room, they go nuts. Some may be experienced and versatile enough to make that change.

RF: How much latitude do you get?

JP: I've been fortunate that on the sessions I happen to do, I have a lot of latitude. One of my favorite, favorite engineers is Al Schmidt. Al Schmidt recorded all the rhythm stuff for *Toto IV*, and not once—for that or anything since—did I ever hear, "Show up an hour early before the session. Can I hear the bass drum? Can I hear the snare drum? I have to set my gates. Can I hear the tom-toms?" I remember Roy Halee. When I worked with him on a Paul Simon record in New York, Roy was the same way—the kind of guy who listens to musicians play, and as you're running a song down, is hearing how you play. It cracks me up how many engineers never walk out into that room to hear what your instrument sounds like. They just stay in that control room. "Snare drum doesn't sound good, man." Al Schmidt, Roy Halee, and George Massenburg would walk out into the room, listen to the sounds, and hear if I changed the snare drum. What if I'm using a high-pitched piccolo snare drum on this tune now, and I'm in a big open room? They walk around, they may put up some more overhead parabolic reflectors, they may move the baffles in a little closer, they may move a couple of the mic's to get a tighter

STEVE FERRONE

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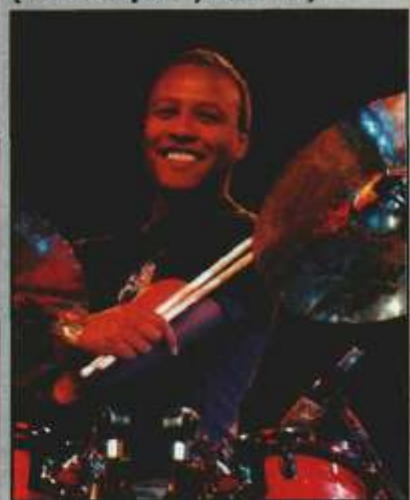
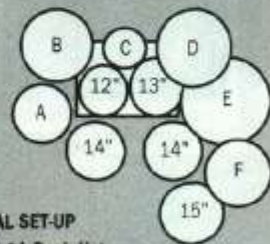


Photo: Ron Lee

Although his drumming with Brian Auger's Oblivion Express won him a legion of fans, it was Steve Ferrone's longtime stint with the soulful Average White Band, most notably, his rock steady syncopations on their hit album 'Cut The Cake' that launched him into the successful sessions career he now enjoys.

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RF: The artist.

JP: The functions vary, how good they are varies, how fun the music is to play varies. But the artist, to me, is the most inspiring thing. First of all, I'm being paid a high wage to work for him. Or, I'm being paid a high wage to work for the producer who suggested to the artist that I'm the guy to use. It depends on the session. Lately, on most sessions I do, the artist has the influence. I'm a guy who gets upset if I walk into the session early and hear someone bugging the artist before he plays. Or if I see that the artist doesn't have what he should have, I get personally upset. It becomes a personal thing to me. It's important that the artist be comfortable and have what he needs so all that's on his mind is to do his thing. If an artist gets the musicians excited, you're going to get something good. I don't care what style it is, you're going to get something good.

RF: I have to ask about Ricky Lee Jones. Carlos Vega mentioned his experience in my interview with him, and he mentioned you.

JP: I was called to do the entire Ricky Lee Jones *Pirates* album. On her first album, I got called in to replace a certain famous drummer's drum part, and I replaced it. I forgot the name of the song, but it was a ballad and I played brushes. She remembers that, so she wants me to do her whole next album. The producers are Russ Titelman and Lenny Waronker, and I get a tape of the demos a month before the sessions. What a great thing. I go to the session, it's Chuck Rainey on bass, Dean Parks on guitar, Russell Ferrante on piano, Lenny Castro on percussion, and Ricky Lee Jones playing piano and singing. The drums are in an isolation booth with a big glass going across so I can see everybody in the main studio. I have my headphones on, and we start going over the first song. After the first pass of the tune, Ricky Lee in the phones goes, "Mr. Porcaro, I know you're known for keeping good time, but on these sessions, I can't have you do that. With my music, when I'm telling my story, I like things to speed up and slow down, and I like people to follow me." When she said it, there was something in the tone of her voice that was weird, but that wasn't predominant in my mind. The first thing that entered my mind was that it reminded me of Seal & Crofts, who liked to have their bridges up, but not radically. So the natural thing for me to say to Lee Herschberg, the engineer, was, "Can I have more of Ricky's vocal and piano in my phones," very calm.

We start playing again, and I'm pretty good at listening to people and following. She stops halfway through and says, "The

time is too straight. You gotta loosen up a little bit. Did you notice on this one line, I'm speeding the line up, and I need you to speed up with me." I go, "I'm sorry. Lee, can I have a little bit more of Ricky's vocal. Take my drums down in the phones just a little bit." We start again from the top and we come to that same section and I hear her intentionally speeding up, it seems like, and emphasizing it. I'm following, and that's cool. She slows down again, and I thought I was slowing down, but she stops again and says, "Can you hear me good? Try to get out of your..." I got the impression she was saying to get out of my "perfect studio musician" routine and be an artist for her. When she said that, the blood rushed up to my head, because I'm always nervous when I play for anybody, especially people who are critically acclaimed and supposed to be the artistic statement of the times. So I get real nervous because I don't want to be squaresville; I want to be hip. And I look out into the studio, and all the guys in the band—who I've known for years—are looking at me with this look on their faces, and I think, "Wow, what's going on? This is real strange." So we do it one more time, and it is so weird that I think it was Lenny Castro who went into the control room and said something to Russ and Lenny Waronker like, "Guys, what's going on? Call a break or something."

A break is called. Ricky is still at the piano, and I am sitting at my drums going, "What the hell?" And I'm staring at her. She's not looking at me, I'm just looking over at this person hunched over the piano, and she's playing a different song than I have on the demo. Lenny Castro comes to visit me, going, "Man, something is weird," and I say to Lenny, "She's messing with me." I didn't want to go to Russ and Lenny Waronker and cause a scene, but I told Lenny to tell them that they better pay attention to what was going on—to call off the dogs or I'd be skating. I'll take criticism, but I won't take anything that is unnecessary.

So I'm sitting down, and she's playing. She doesn't have headphones on, but Chuck Rainey and I do, and we're playing along with her and it's grooving! It's a shuffle groove, and Lenny and Russ hear it in the booth and go over the talkback, "Ricky, put your phones on. Listen to this." She puts her phones on, she's still playing, and she's going "Yeah!" with a big smile on her face. I go to myself, "Thank Cod." So Lenny and Russ say, "Let's move away from this first thing and do this," and I'm going, "Great!"

So we start laying the track down, and I come up to this simple fill: triplets over one bar. It's written out on my music, and I play the fill. She stops. She says, "You have to play harder." I say, "Okay," with a smile, and we start again. I have brand new heads. I like to keep brand new Ambassador heads on my drums, and my toms are sounding nice. I play the fill again. She stops. "You've got to play harder." Everybody looks at me.

JEAN-PAUL CECCARELLI (Sting/Studio)

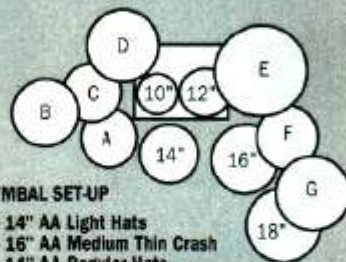


Photo: Adrian Schackmann

With his selection to Sting's all-star band, Jean-Paul Ceccarelli has suddenly found himself thrust into the spotlight of international success on the 'Nothing Like the Sun Tour'... a tour that will see him playing to capacity audiences around the world, including a selection of dates for Amnesty International.

A native of Nice, France, Jean-Paul is renowned in his homeland where he, along with his brother André, a major influence and with whom he has co-authored the best-selling drum book 'The Ceccarelli Experience', ranks as one of that country's leading live and studio sessions drummers.

A versatile player who has been heavily influenced by the Jazz and Fusion greats, Jean-Paul possesses a punchy yet fluid style that has not only kept him in great demand for extensive television and movie soundtracking, but has lent itself perfectly to the wide range of styles that Sting incorporates into his performances.



CYMBAL SET-UP

- A - 14" AA Light Hats
- B - 16" AA Medium Thin Crash
- C - 14" AA Regular Hats
- D - 17" AA Medium Thin Crash
- E - 22" AA Medium Ride
- F - 15" AA Medium Thin Crash
- G - 18" AA Medium Thin Crash

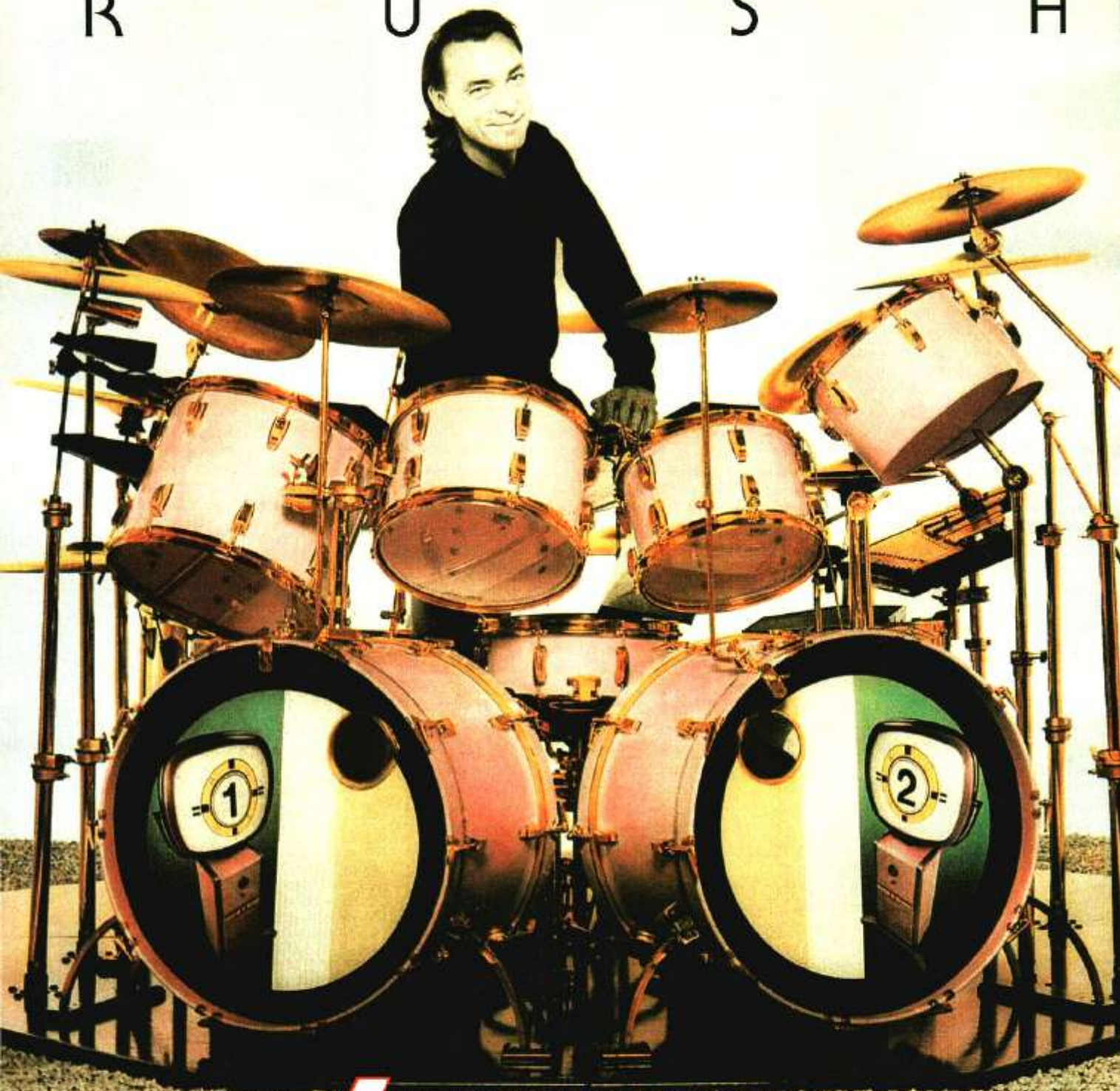


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I look at everybody. I go, "Okay, let's do it again." We start again. One bar before the fill, I hear, louder than hell in my phones, "We're coming up to the fill. Remember to play hard," while we're grooving. I whack the shit out of my drums, as hard as I've ever hit anything in my life. While I'm hitting them, she's screaming, "Harder!" I stop. She stops. I'm looking at my drums. My heads have dents in them; if I hit the drum lightly, it will buzz, and I'm pissed. I'm steaming inside. I'm thinking, "Nobody talks to me that way." Lenny Waronker says, "Let's do it again." We start again, and everybody is looking at me while they are playing. We're coming up to the fill, and she goes, "Play hard!" and I take my sticks like daggers and I do the fill, except I stab holes through my tom-tom heads. I land on my snare drum, both sticks are shaking, vibrating, bouncing on the snare drum. I get up and pick up my gig bag. There's complete silence. I slide open the sliding glass door, walk past her, down the hallway, get in my car, and I drive home.

I get home, and the first call I get is from Lenny Castro. "It's insane here. She's going to sue you. She's got all these musicians here and you split." I said, "Let her sue me. Nobody, but nobody, talks to me that way." If I was the wrong cat, the producers should have broken up the session, called me over, and I would have been the first to say, "Hey, you don't have to give me two days' notice. Find somebody else. I'm the wrong drummer. I'm sorry, I wish I could have been a better drummer for you guys, but I did the best I could." But they let a situation go on way too long for anybody, especially someone like me who worked for them before. I thought I demanded a little more respect.

She never sued me, and I didn't hear anything for a couple of years. Last year I get a call from James Newton-Howard. He's producing Ricky Lee Jones' album and he goes, "You won't believe this, but she wants you to play on two songs." I go, "Does she know who I am?" What I really didn't know, but had perceived—although I didn't take it into complete consideration—was maybe, at the time, she was going through some hard times, like we all go through, and I got messed with. Maybe we all handle our hard times differently. The way James Newton-Howard explained it over the phone was, "Maybe she doesn't remember that situation too well." I said, "Whether she does or doesn't, I'd love to play with her. I hold no grudges. I know that you, knowing that whole story, won't let that happen. If I'm wrong, you'll just stop the session and do an overdub while you find a drummer for the next session."

I get there. Ricky says, "Hi Jeff, good to see you again. You seem to have lost weight." Well, actually I had gained 30 pounds from the last time she saw me, so for a second I thought, "She's messing with me." But I realized she was much more together than the last time I had seen her, and she looked gorgeous. The plan was to

do one song a day; we were booked for six hours a day for two days. We did the first song in two takes. "Thank you, see you guys tomorrow." The second song we did in three takes. At the end of three takes, in front of the whole band, including people who had been there when I had stabbed my drums with the sticks, she says, "Jeff, I really have to tell you this. No drummer has ever played so great for me, listened to my music so closely, understood what I'm saying with lyrics, and has followed me as well as you. I just want to thank you for the good tracks." I almost broke up laughing because I had played no differently for her the year before.

The story got around where it was either Jeff who went way left under the pressure—which I can go; I've gone left under less pressure, believe me—or that Ricky went left on Jeff. Whatever the case may be, that was just one situation. We've worked with each other under other circumstances. Yet, I would still do the same thing with anybody. I'll help you find somebody for your session. It's not like I'm a triple-scale, \$1,000-a-day drummer, like a lot of drummers. I've been double scale since 1975. I believe I get paid great for what I do, but if anything, people will tell you I work for free and I don't charge for overtime. So it wasn't an attitude trip or anything. I just demand respect—human respect.

RF: Aside from the studio thing, there's Toto, which is your own. Everybody thinks it's glamorous to have your own band. But isn't it harder to be in your own band—where the successes and failures are absolutely your own—than doing most session work, where you wash your hands of it the minute you walk out that door?

JP: Get four MIT scholars and show them my career in the band, and show them my career as a musician. They'll have me put in an insane asylum for even thinking about being in a band. Being in a group is hard, too, because you have five guys, but it's a study in boy scouting. It's a little club. It's hard to keep a democracy together, as this country knows, and Toto has done it for ten years. Not too many bands have been together for ten years, and we've done it with the ups and downs of being ripped off. We're not rich. If any of us put money away in our early 20's that's still collecting interest, that's what we're buying groceries with right now. Maybe it'll be better if this album does well, but believe me, there have been so many opportunities for Toto to have said, "Man, let's not be a band anymore because it's not economical." But the joys of being in a band are so great, and the potential of there being economic success doing something you love is always there. I don't know how long it can last, because as everyone gets older and there are more financial responsibilities and families, that is more important than anything. So other things start taking a back seat. The importance of having freedom takes a back seat.

LARRIE LONDIN (Everly Brothers/Studio)

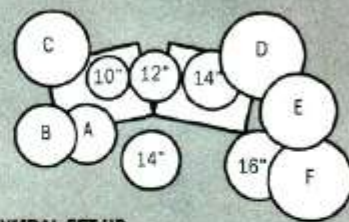


Photo: Jan Meyerowitz

One of the most recorded and successful session players of all time, Larrie Londin's dynamic drumming and creative versatility have made him the choice of a multitude of major artists...resulting in a resumé that reads like a who's who of the best in contemporary music.

Among those who have benefitted from Larrie's tremendous talents are Elvis Presley (Guitar Man), Steve Perry (Oh Sherry), Glenn Frey (The Heat Is On), Neil Young (Comes A Time), Ronnie Milsap (Stranger In My House), Journey (Raised On Radio), Chet Atkins (Stay Tuned), as well as B. B. King, Dolly Parton, Waylon Jennings, Jerry Reed, Joe Cocker, Adrian Belew...and the list goes on!

Also a powerful live performer and clinician, Larry says, "In the studio or on stage, Sabian cymbals always deliver, the quality and sound never fail to meet my needs."



CYMBAL SET-UP

- A - 14" AA Rock Hats
- B - 15" AA Rock Hats (closed)
- C - 18" AA Medium Crash
- D - 20" HH Sound Control Hi-Bell Ride
- E - 18" AA Extra Thin Crash
- F - 20" AA Chinese

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Ludwig Super Classic Kit



ters and clear *Rocker* bottom heads. The bass drum featured a black *Rocker* Ludwig-logo front head.

The Sound

Let's start with the most important element of any drumkit: its sound. These drums sound terrific! The thin shells allow for a tremendous amount of resonance, and a bright, cutting attack. I used the kit on several of my gigs, and my band commented on how huge they sounded—especially the bass drum. I was impressed by the timpani-like sustain that the toms provided; I actually had to muffle them a bit to keep them under control (which I normally never do on any drum). This means that they still had lots of "headroom" for power and resonance, should it have been necessary.

The bass drum was deep and boomy, owing to the depth of the shell and the intact front head. Concerned at first about this boominess, I originally planned to cut a hole in the front head to control some of the overring. But I found that a small piece of suede taped to the batter head a couple of inches below the beater impact point deadened the impact just enough to keep the bass drum controlled without losing that big, fat sound. I was able to use the drum at moderate volume and still retain a full, round, bottomy character; when I really hit the drum *hard*, I swear I could see plaster falling off the ceiling of the club.

Now, I must point out that all of this tremendous sound was produced by the drums after I made a significant drumhead change. When we first received the kit, it was fitted with Ludwig's *Silver Dot* batters on all the toms and the bass drum. Everyone at *MD* played the kit, and we all agreed that the heads did not serve the kit well. They tended to sound too thin and "attacky" (owing to their single-ply construction and thick plastic dot) on drums that already had a bright sound with a lot of cut. The bass drum especially sounded thin and high-pitched. The bottom heads seemed to resonate just fine; the problem seemed restricted to the top heads. So we changed them over to Remo *Pinstripes* on the toms, and a clear *Emperor* on the bass drum. The difference was amazing! The drums seemed to come into their own, producing depth and tone and projection that were truly impressive.

In fairness to Ludwig's drumheads, keep in mind that the qualities desired from a given head selection will vary with every drummer. You might find that the attack produced by a *Silver Dot* head in combination with a *Super Classic* drum is just what you're looking for. With any new set

The last time we featured a Ludwig drumkit in *Product Close-Up* was March of 1986, when we covered that company's *Rocker II* series. Since then, Ludwig has introduced a new line, called the *Super Classic* series. These drums feature relatively thin (4-ply) maple shells with no reinforcing rings, in an effort to return to the type of construction and sound that made Ludwig drums the standard of the industry in the '50s and '60s. But the kits also feature Ludwig's top-of-the-line *Modular* series hardware, so they are by no means

historical recreations or throwbacks. The *Super Classics* are offered by Ludwig as high-quality, professional drums, intended to provide an alternative sound to the majority of the kits on the market today.

The kit we tested was the *LS-4426-MM* model, and consisted of a 16x22 bass drum, 9x10 and 11x12 deep rack toms, and 12x13 and 13x14 suspended "floor" toms. A 6 1/2 x14 *Supra-Phonic* snare drum is standard with the kit. The kit was finished in Ludwig's Classic Mahogany stain, and was fitted with Ludwig's *Silver Dot Rocker* heavy-duty bat-

& Black Beauty Snare

of drums, an experienced drummer is likely to experiment with many different brands and types of drumheads in order to find the best combination for his or her personal tastes and needs. This just serves to illustrate how important it is not to judge the performance of any kit on the basis of a couple of whacks with a stick in the dealer's showroom.

In terms of overall pitch relationships, I would have preferred a kit with more traditional floor tom sizes. I know that smaller, suspended toms are quite popular today—especially for recording. But although the individual sound of each drum on our test kit was quite large and powerful, and the intervals between them quite distinct, there's no way to achieve the *pitch* of a 16x16 floor tom on a 13x14 suspended drum. However, Ludwig has already considered this, and notes in its catalog that this same kit configuration is available with drums in several different sizes, including a 14x15 suspended tom as the largest size. I certainly would like to have heard a 16x16 traditional floor tom from this series; I tend to think it would have rivaled a timpani!

The *Supra-Phonic* snare drum has been one of Ludwig's most popular snares for years. It is a fine, well-designed, good-sounding chrome snare. Our test drum had all the qualities you would expect from a metal snare drum: cut, projection, a loud, cracking rimshot sound, and crisp snare response. The 6 1/2" shell depth gave the snare a full-bodied sound. As is the case with most metal snares, any attempt to bring the pitch of the drum up too high resulted in a soup-kettle clanginess. (If you want a higher-pitched snare, Ludwig offers a 5" model in this same series.) The Ludwig white-coated *Rocker* batter head sounded fine on the drum when the appropriate amount of ring control was applied. (I used a medium Noble & Cooley *Zero Ring*.)

Design And Construction

The overall workmanship and quality control on our test kit was absolutely flawless. Particularly nice was the fact that the drumshells were stained on the inside and outside, including even the bearing edges. This gave a very rich, deep appearance to the overall kit, considering the clear bottom heads that allowed a view of the insides of the drums. Ludwig applies a clear lacquer to the insides of all *Super Classic* shells. This provides both a moisture seal and a reflective surface for sound that undoubtedly contributes to the drums' cutting power.

The bearing edges of all the drums were perfect. Ludwig points out in its catalog

that every bearing edge is machine-feathered "for optimum shell-to-head contact" and then hand waxed. I could feel the smoothness of the waxed bearing edge when I was changing the heads, and can attest to the way the heads fitted quickly and evenly on the drum. This contributed to a very easy tuning process.

Another contribution to tuning was made by the tension lugs and lug receivers. When loosened, every tension lug spun smoothly and quietly on and off each drum with the merest twirl of a drumkey. (And remember, I changed a lot of heads.) And yet, once tensioned, each lug stayed in place; I had no problem with needing to re-tune any of the heads constantly. This is evidence of excellent machining—an attribute I found present throughout the kit.

I do have a few small complaints about the overall design of the kit. The most important of these pertain to the *Modular* double tom mount on the bass drum. It is positioned on the shell much closer to one edge than to the other. Most companies offset their shell mounts somewhat, to allow for flexibility in tom placement. A drummer may position the toms closer or further away from himself (or herself) simply by deciding which bass drum head will be the "front" and which will be the "batter." That's to the good. But I think Ludwig positions the tom mount a bit *too far* off center—especially with a 16" deep bass drum shell. What happened in my case was that when I set the toms up in the "traditional" manner, with the tom mount as far away from me as possible, I could not bring the 10"



tom close enough in to my snare drum—even when I mounted it at the very end of the tom arm. When I experimented with turning the bass drum around and mounting the toms with the mount close to me, the toms were placed *too close*—even when I put them as far back as possible on the tom arms. Once again, this is a problem that will not apply to every drummer, since drumkit arrangement is such a personal matter. On the other hand, I do feel that a good tom-mounting design should be as universal as possible. I can see two very simple solutions to this particular problem: The tom mount could be placed a bit more toward the center of the bass drum shell, or the tom-mounting arms could be made a



main reason I object to "suspended" floor toms—no matter what their size or resulting pitch—is that they hang from a floor stand that must have a wide tripod base in order to support them. This base generally extends out and away from the drums, thereby taking up almost twice as much floor space as would traditional floor toms with vertical legs of their own. Coming from a background of club work where stage space is always at a premium, I see this as a handicap. I readily admit that the *LS-4426-MM* kit mounts a cymbal boom on the same stand, and that one could argue that this combination could actually save floor space. But a separate cymbal boom could be placed in many places on the kit (with a much smaller tripod base spread) and still put a cymbal in approximately the same place in the air; this one can only go in one basic spot, since the placement of floor toms is pretty much standard. Again, this is a matter of personal taste and application—but I do think it's something to be aware of when you are considering your overall set design.

Hardware

little longer to allow smaller drums to extend out a bit farther.

Another problem I had with the tom mounting system is speculative in nature. Ludwig's *Modular* system involves massive castings. For the tom mount, there is one such casting on the bass drum, another atop the adjustable height post, and slightly smaller ones on each of the two rack toms themselves. Add to this the lengths of steel tubing that connect all these castings, and you have a significant amount of hardware weight—not to mention the weight of the two rack toms themselves. All of this is being supported by a 4-ply drumshell with no reinforcing rings. I am concerned that the shell might eventually be forced out of round under all this weight. Again, a simple solution might be the use of an extendable down tube to distribute some of the weight onto the bottom of the shell as well as the top—thereby equalizing the weight and keeping the shell in round. An option available to any buyer, of course, would be to slightly alter the configuration of the kit—which is extremely easy to do with Ludwig's *Modular* system—and opt for toms suspended completely from floor stands and/or cymbal stands, keeping them off of the bass drum entirely. This would probably also benefit the sound of the bass drum (not that it needs much help!).

I mentioned earlier that I would have preferred traditional floor toms to the mounted toms supplied with this kit. The

Given the reservations I've already mentioned (along with a few others I'll mention later), I must say that I was extremely impressed by Ludwig's *Modular* hardware. It is very strong, very well-machined, and beautifully finished. There are some excellently thought-out touches to specific items, such as the grooved shafts in the "pistol ratchet" tom arm assemblies that allow for the horizontal adjustment of the suspended floor toms without the tom arms falling out of the mount—even when placed in the mount upside-down. The three different grooves also improve the flexibility of rack tom positioning. During actual playing, the tom mounts proved to be as stable as any I've ever seen; even with oversize drums there was absolutely no movement, drooping, or sagging. This applies both to the rack tom mount on the bass drum and the double tom stand suspending the two "floor" toms.

The cymbal stands (one *LM-426-CS* straight stand and one *LM-436-MBS* mini-boom) feature nylon bushings at all adjustment points (which made for smooth operation and a secure grip). The legs are double-braced, and the tripods wide and stable. All wing bolts are large, allowing for a comfortable grip in the hand. I've seen bigger stands, but not by much. These would certainly accommodate any ride or crash cymbals for even the hardest players, but (as has often been said) might be a bit much for casual or weekend drummers.

A clever and thoughtful design element is featured on the cymbal tilters. The last quarter inch or so of the tilter bolt is smaller in diameter than the balance of the bolt, which makes spinning the wing nut on or off—even one-handed and in the dark—very quick and easy. You can drop the nut on over the tip without having to feel for the beginning of the threads, and just spin it down into place. When you spin the nut off, it comes up to the top of the threads and then spins free around the smaller lip; it doesn't fly off. A minor convenience, I'll admit, but who needs the aggravation of disappearing wing nuts?

The *LM-416-HH* hi-hat is probably the nicest I've stepped on in a long time. Generally speaking, a hi-hat either works or it doesn't; there aren't too many features that you can discuss. The *Modular* hi-hat is an exception, in that there is an intangible involved: comfort. From the first time I tried it, I was impressed by how *comfortable* it felt to operate. All of the basic elements are what you'd expect: double-braced legs, wide footplate, twin external springs, chain-pull action. These features are found on almost any pro-quality hi-hat today. But this one was so smooth, and so quiet, and quite simply so *nice* to play on, that it stands out from others I've tried.

I wish I could be so enthusiastic about the snare stand (*LM-421-SS*). Basically, there is nothing wrong with the stand; it's a solid, basket-type stand that has a decent height range for drumset purposes (Ludwig also offers a *Low-Profile* model for extra-low positioning and deep drums) and holds the drum quite securely. My objection is to the legs and feel. In order to reach the stand's lowest height point, the adjustable tripod base must be extended out to quite a wide spread. But this is usually impossible when filling a snare stand in among bass drum and hi-hat pedals, the hoop of the bass drum, and other floor stand feel. Most drummers I know tend to bring the legs of their snare stand up quite a bit, in order to minimize spread. With Ludwig's stand, doing this raises the height of the snare drum quite a bit. I had difficulty getting my snare to the level I wanted while keeping the legs to a manageable spread. Once I did find that compromise point, I still had the stand's immense rubber feel to deal with.

I like rubber feel on any stand; they help to protect against slipping on solid floors, and also protect the drums and stands against scratches when items are moved in close to one another. However, I think Ludwig's feel (on *all* the *Modular* stands) lend to overdo a good thing. The oversize feel on the snare stand made it absolutely impossible for me to tuck one stand leg as far as I wanted it to go into the corner where the bass drum pedal meets the bass drum hoop. As a result, the snare drum was easily 1/2" to 3/4" too far to the left. That doesn't sound like much, but try playing

precise rimshots when your rim isn't where you're used to having it. My suggestion here would simply be to reduce the mass of rubber involved with these feet.

The LM-441-TSM double tom stand serves its purpose very well, supporting the suspended floor toms with no visible movement at all—even when they are hit *hard*. The mini-boom fitted into the third hole of the casting is a useful touch, and the height adjustability of the stand (when combined with upside-down mounting of the ratchet arms) allows for quite low tom positioning. I was able to get my toms as low as I wanted them, and still keep them flat. I've had problems achieving this with other, similar, suspended floor tom stand configurations in the past; it was refreshing not to have any such problems while testing this kit.

The bass drum pedal supplied with this kit is the granddaddy of 'em all: the *Speed King*. So much has been written about this pedal over the years that most people know all about it. It's fast, it's smooth, it's fairly durable, it's simple in construction—and it squeaks. Right out of the box, our test pedal came supplied with the classic *Speed King* squeak, which no amount of fiddling or lubrication would get rid of. And while I venture to say that on an amplified rock gig no one would ever notice the noise, my band members did comment on it during a fairly low-volume private party we played while I was testing the drumkit. I don't profess to know what it is about this pedal that makes it squeak, but I've never known one that didn't, or known anyone else who owned one that didn't. It's just a part of tradition that comes with the otherwise excellent performance of this pedal: "Love me...love my squeak!"

Although a drum throne is not included in the drumkit package, Ludwig thoughtfully sent along a representative throne from the *Modular* series. It is of the piano-stool variety, and features a seat with thick, firm foam padding. Double braced legs and a wide stance make this seat quite stable and strong. It is available separately at a price of \$117.00.

Overall, Ludwig's *Modular* system offers a great deal of flexibility in the positioning of drums and stands. For example, in addition to the six-piece configuration shown in the catalog for this kit, we were able to create a very comfortable four-piece jazz kit using the 10" and 14" toms, and suspending the ride cymbal from a mini-boom arm mounted in the bass drum tom mount. All of the hardware adjusted easily, with memory clamps where they needed to be and twin drumkey-adjustable tightening bolts on the tom mounting castings for extra security. The oversize ratchet teeth on the tom and cymbal tilters did not allow for infinite adjustability, but by the time we combined all the various ways of moving drums and cymbals, we could get just about

any setup we desired.

All in all, I was most impressed by the *Super Classic* kit. Taken in perspective, most of my criticisms are minor, and many are of a personal nature that may not be at all important to most other drummers. I want to emphasize again that this is a set with a sound and character all its own, and I think that that, above all, is its most appealing feature. The LS-4426-MM model, as reviewed, lists for \$2,895.00.

The Black Beauty Snare Drum

As an added treat, Ludwig provided us with a 6 1/2" snare drum from its recently reinstated *Black Beauty* series. This drum is identical to the *Supra-Phonic* in terms of shell design and hardware, including ten double-ended lugs, Ludwig's simple and efficient P-85 cord-type snare strainer, and triple-flanged hoops. But the material with which the shell is made makes a great deal of difference. The *Black Beauty* features a bronze shell, in what Ludwig calls a Gun Metal finish. This is a gleaming black/grey finish that contrasts very nicely with the chrome lugs and hoops.

(In the interest of historical accuracy, I should point out that the "classic" *Black Beauty* snare drums of the '30s and '40s were made of brass. However, the models made in the '70s and discontinued until recently were made with bronze shells.)

The sound of the *Black Beauty* I played differed from that of the *Supra-Phonic* (which I consider to be representative of a "standard" metal drum) in several ways. Both had crispness, but the bronze drum seemed a bit drier and more precise. If truth be told, the "crack" of most metal snare drums might be more accurately described as a "clank." I didn't find this to be the case with the *Black Beauty*. The drum had a much clearer and less ringy "crack" sound—especially when playing rimshots. (This description is based on a comparison of playing the *Black Beauty* and the *Supra-Phonic* drums side by side, tuned as closely to the same pitch as possible, and fitted with the same Ludwig coated *Rockerheads* and the same size *Zero Rings*.)

The *Black Beauty* was a bit more responsive to softer playing than was the *Supra-Phonic*—and yet it cut like crazy when I really laid into it. My band also commented on the power and attractive sound of this drum. I don't know whether or not the "classic" nature of this drum gave me some psychological predisposition toward it. I will say that I've heard some equally classic drums from other manufacturers and was not nearly as impressed. I'm pleased that Ludwig has seen fit to offer the *Black Beauty* again, and even more pleased to hear the performance that today's version of this "classic" drum has to offer. List price is \$475.00.



When we put the **Aquarian** heads on my kit, the group and our sound engineer noticed the difference immediately. The **Aquarian** drumheads sound bigger, better, deeper and fuller than any other heads, and I've tried them all.

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Vinny Appice

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have you been with him?

RG: It's been eight years, on and off. I didn't play on two of his tours. Those were in '85 and '86. I have played on all of the albums in that time though.

WFM: Can you think of any specific things that you have learned from working with Ponty?

ply that same kind of thinking in my own playing.

WFM: When Jean-Luc brings in a new song, does he use charts?

RG: Originally, he'd have a chart or he would know what he wanted. He might have a part programmed on a drum machine that I would learn and then add a

WFM: On the past few Ponty records, he has moved away from having an entire band recording in the studio and toward playing and/or programming most of the instruments himself, except for the drums. How does that affect you?

RG: Well, I look at it as just the way technology is going. At this point, most musicians, if they're good musicians, can theoretically go into the studio and do an album by themselves. Luckily, Jean-Luc still prefers using live drums. On most of the tracks we've done, I would play along to Synclavier and with a bass player, which would help keep things from feeling too mechanical. There is some interaction going on between the bass player and myself. Working this way restricts my playing a little bit, because I might stretch out a bit more with four or five guys in the room going for it. Also, the interplay between a whole band is more exciting, but it's just a different approach. On a few of the new tracks, Jean-Luc came in and soloed over sections with the bass player and me so we would have some kind of idea what was going to be happening. That helped with the interplay as well.

WFM: When recording with Jean-Luc, does he offer any opinions as to the way your drums should sound?

RG: As far as the sounds of the drums themselves, like tuning and that type of thing, that's completely up to me. On the last album, I toyed around with it a little bit, but I didn't do anything drastic. I used some different drums on certain songs, but that was about it. What normally happens is that we record the drums before we start tracking, and then I go in and listen to see if that's what I want to hear. So the ball's in my court on this one; Jean-Luc leaves that up to me.

WFM: Does he make any suggestions as to what cymbals you use?

RG: For the most part that's also up to me. If there is something specific that he knows he wants to hear, he might suggest it, but that doesn't happen too often. Sometimes he might suggest that I play a different cymbal in a certain part of a song. Let's say one cymbal is too loud for a certain accent he wants to hear; he'll suggest me playing a different one on the kit. That happens once in a while.

WFM: Speaking of cymbals, does your setup change between the studio and live playing?

RG: It may change slightly if there is a certain effect I want while I'm recording. I may use a lighter ride cymbal in a softer tune, or use a different type of crash cymbal—whatever is necessary.

WFM: How long did it take to record the last album?

RG: I was in the studio doing my parts for only four days.

WFM: Did you get demos of the materials before you went in?

RG: Yes. About a week before I started recording, I went up to his house and he gave me a copy of all of the Synclavier

"Good soloing is not a question of technique. How you compose the solo is more important."

RG: Jean-Luc has helped me get into the whole polyrhythm concept to a much greater degree. As a matter of fact, when I'm playing with him, my thinking is totally different from any other situation I work in. I love the way Jean-Luc layers rhythms on top of each other, and that makes the music very interesting to play from a drumming standpoint. I try to ap-

ply that same kind of thinking in my own playing. **WFM:** When Jean-Luc brings in a new song, does he use charts? **RG:** Originally, he'd have a chart or he would know what he wanted. He might have a part programmed on a drum machine that I would learn and then add a

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parts and some rough drum-machine ideas that he had for those parts. I took that tape and programmed parts on my drum machine for those songs. That way I could really analyze the drum parts to make sure they worked and sounded good. Then I learned those parts on the drums themselves.

WFM: On the new album, there's a song where you play almost nothing but hi-hat and bass drum. Is that something that he suggested?

RG: His input was that he wanted me to play a pattern on hi-hat and bass drum that resembled the parts I played on some of his earlier works. That was the main thing that I played in the body of the song. So, because someone tells you, "Okay, play just bass drum and hi-hat," that can sound limiting, especially to someone who has as many drums as I do. [laughs] But the point is that you have to take that limitation and turn it into something musical, so that's what I tried to do in this case with just bass drum and hi-hat. I used accents to correspond with what was going on elsewhere in the music, as well as dynamics and that sort of thing; that's what you have to do.

WFM: How did you feel about the drum sound on *The Gift Of Time*?

RG: Actually, I've never played on an album where I was completely happy with the drum sound. On *The Gift Of Time*, some of the songs have a good drum sound and some aren't exactly how I would have had them sounding. But that's to be expected. When someone else has the final say and hears things differently than you do, he'll do it the way he thinks is best. That's only fair. I suppose the only way I'll be happy with my drum sound is when I do my own album.

I'm sure a lot of other working musicians have had these feelings. You come in, play your part, and split. Then it's up to somebody else to put everything together. And then when you hear the record, it seems so different than how you envisioned it while you were recording your parts. That's just the way it goes.

WFM: When you are performing live, do you work with sequencers, or does the keyboard player handle all of the parts?

RG: There were two songs on the last tour that involved a drum machine, but other than that, the keyboard player played all of the parts.

WFM: When Jean-Luc is putting together a tour, how much rehearsal time do you have?

RG: On all of the tours previous to this last one, we took about two weeks. We spent a little over two and a half weeks preparing for this last tour, and we just barely made it by the skin of our teeth. Since Jean-Luc had so many parts on the album that were played by Synclavier, it was more challenging for the band to reproduce those sounds live. Before, when the albums were recorded by a band, all that had to happen was for the band to just play their parts live.

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RG: I have a lot of respect for him, first of all. His musicianship, of all the people I've worked with, is on such a high level. He is very consistent, and he is more "on" than most musicians. He always nails the part. That keeps me on my toes, just being in that kind of company. As a boss, he's pretty easygoing. I mean, he wants what he wants when he wants it, but that's to be understood. Also, his music is not something to be taken lightly; you have to do your homework to make it come off right.

WFM: How long was the last Ponty tour?

RG: It started in September of '87 and went through November of that year. Then we worked in January '88, and in May we were in South America. In July we toured Europe, and in August we toured the States a second time. That was all of the live gigs that we did for *The Gift Of Time* tour.

WFM: Playing all of these different places, do you notice any differences in the audiences?

RG: The audience response is different. In the States, it's not uncommon for an artist to tour once a year, so the audience isn't overly excited. But when I was down in Chile with Jean-Luc, a place where we don't

play that often, the audience was crazed—definitely the most enthusiastic audience that I've ever seen! That type of response isn't that common when you're playing fusion; it seemed more like a major rock act. In fact, they screamed so loud that my ears actually hurt onstage from their voices alone!

WFM: About how many months per year do you spend working with Ponty?

RG: Normally, it averages about three to four months per year, which includes recording the album and touring. Over the past year and a half, I've been working with Jean-Luc over eight months of that time, which is the most that I've worked with him continuously.

WFM: Why are there such gaps of time in your touring schedule? It seems that you toured for three months, took two off, went out for a month, took some more time off, and then went out again.

RG: I guess for the most part it's the nature of the music. If the style of music you perform is pop, for example, you tour constantly to support the record. With music like Jean-Luc's, he does tour in support of an album, but he can also tour when he wants to because of the nature of the music. His fans will come and see him whenever. He doesn't have to have a number-one jazz album on the charts for people to know that they will enjoy a live performance.

WFM: You mentioned before that you have been on the road with Jean-Luc on this tour for a considerably longer amount of time than usual. What do you think accounts for this?

RG: I think part of it has to do with the job his management is doing. I also think a part of it has to do with the times, now that new age music is prevalent. Interviewers have tried to categorize Jean-Luc as a new age artist, but actually he's been what he's been. The music industry has come up with this name, which in a way vaguely resembles the type of music Jean-Luc writes, and I think that has made it easier for people to get into his music. Maybe that's why we've been able to work so much, even though I really don't know how you can call what Jean-Luc does new age.

WFM: Your performances with Ponty seem physically demanding. Are there things you do outside of drumming to help prepare you for the demands of being on the road?

RG: The main thing that I used to do a lot was stretch before gigs. I work enough so that my endurance isn't normally a problem. The drumming itself kept me in shape. Recently, I started working out a few times a week, just to see if it would have any effect on my playing, and strangely enough, it does make a difference. I'm able to hit the drum hard with less effort. I was kind of surprised, because I thought that working out might stiffen me up. I've had positive results from it.

WFM: Along with being in shape, I would imagine that pacing yourself would be another factor when trying to get through a

strenuous gig.

RG: To be perfectly honest, I don't think about it that much. If the tune is a really up thing that calls for me to play "balls-buster" on, I do it. If the next song happens to be that way, then I go for that, too. Normally, though, Jean-Luc organizes his set in such a way that it has high points physically and emotionally, as well as not quite so high points. So I don't have a problem with stamina.

Jean-Luc is understanding of that type of thing. His music involves a lot of fast tempos with many notes for everybody in the band, not just me. He orders the set with those things in mind. In fact, Jean-Luc even asks me if I'm up to second or third encores. I normally play a solo in the last tune of the set, which is usually a fast song, and then we come back and do an encore, which is normally an up-tempo tune as well. And if it seems that we can do another song, he will ask me if I feel alright for another. After a good set I just want to keep on playing anyway, so I always say "yes" when he asks.

WFM: Do you find that your level of concentration is greater when playing a gig with Jean-Luc compared to playing a more pop-oriented gig?

RG: Yes and no. I try to pay attention and be aware of everything that is happening on stage all of the time, no matter who the artist. Although there have been situations where I've been bored to tears. But that's not to say that my ears weren't wide open and paying attention.

I would say the concentration level is the same, but it's used in different ways. With Jean-Luc, I have to pay attention to many things, not the least of which are cues to different sections of songs, for example. When I was working with Cameo, my main concern was to make sure the time was happening and that I caught the kicks they would make onstage—those types of things. It's concentration any way you cut it; it's just different types of things that you have to concentrate on.

WFM: When I saw you with Ponty recently, you were concentrating to such a degree that you didn't bother with any showmanship-type things—flipping sticks or making facial expressions, for instance. How do you feel about that sort of thing?

RG: I think it's great, actually. I wasn't in a drum corps, so I didn't learn the stick twirling thing. And when some guys in high school band were trying to learn how to do it, my attitude was, "If it doesn't make a sound, I'm not interested." I was more concerned with getting the playing down first.

At this point, I see guys do it and it always goes over big with the audience, whether they are playing well or not. For people who have no ears for music, something visual gives them something they can relate to. I don't have anything against it at all, even though it's not something I do.

WFM: I recently saw an interview with Stanley Clarke, where he stated that you were the best young drummer happening

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today. That's quite a compliment.

RG: Yes, that was. I saw that interview too. It was interesting to me because I took what he said two ways; I was glad about what he said and a little surprised, but he did mention a few other players, and with all of these other guys, he said something specific about their playing. I wish he would have said what it was he liked about my playing, just so I know what I'm doing right. [laughs]

WFM: When did you start working with Stanley?

RG: I started working with Stanley the summer of '84. I was out with Cameo earlier that year, and they had about two more months to go on that tour. I got a call from Stanley at that time, so I finished the tour with Cameo and then left to work with him. I thought I would enjoy playing Stanley's music a bit more than Cameo's. It was fun with Cameo, because we were touring arenas and the whole production was very big. It was just time to move on to something else.

WFM: How did Stanley hear about you?

RG: I met Stanley during the first tour I did with Jean-Luc back in 1981, when we played at the Civic Center in Los Angeles. I was freakin' out because I was playing with Jean-Luc, for one, and there were all these people backstage at the gig who I had admired and listened to. There I was, meeting George Duke, Stanley, Lee Ritenour, and a few others. That was the first time I

had met Stanley. I used to bump into him from time to time around L.A., too. Stanley had also seen me play with keyboardist Rodney Franklin, who I did a tour with. In fact, Stanley had produced the album that we were supporting with that tour. Altogether it took about four years before he decided to give me a call to do some work with him.

The first thing I did with Stanley was a tour in support of his *Time Exposure* album. That was in 1984. Right after that we recorded the *Find Out* album. That was recorded at the very beginning of '85. We toured behind that album, covering the States, South America, and Europe.

WFM: Do you do any type of session work?

RG: Not as much as I would like. Since I'm on the road, it's hard to do it. When I first moved out to L.A., it seemed like I was starting to break into the studio scene, but just as I was getting known, I left town to tour with Jean-Luc. That was right about the time when drum machines were getting very popular, so the guys who were already in, like the Jim Keltners and the Jeff Porcaros, were getting the calls, or drum machines were being used. That, combined with my not being in town enough, made it tough for me.

Lately, on most of the sessions that I have been doing, I've been using electronic drums. The time it takes to get a good sound with Simmons is much faster than with acoustic drums, so that's what I've

been doing. I prefer getting a good sound with an acoustic set, but for sessions, it's faster with the Simmons.

WFM: When you were working with Stanley, his material at that time was very commercial sounding, which is quite different from the style of music you play with Jean-Luc. Which type of music do you prefer playing?

RG: I like playing both. If I were to do nothing but Jean-Luc music all year, I would probably have a strong urge to just play some 2 and 4, or some funk. The same is true the other way. When I was with Cameo, I had the urge to play in 7/8. Varying it up keeps my playing fresh.

WFM: When you're playing a pop gig for a while, do your fusion chops go away?

RG: They do; they definitely do! Gearing up for this tour, I had to get back in shape to play this kind of music, because a lot of Jean-Luc's tempos are 120 plus. With a pop gig, you're not going to be playing those super-fast tempos or fills.

I feel very fortunate. I've talked to a few guys who do mainly pop gigs, and who would really like the opportunity to stretch out. This is one of the few gigs where you are required to stretch out and play everything you know. I'm lucky I get the chance to do both.

WFM: You are known primarily for your work with fusion artists. Do you think that maybe you've been typecast as that kind of player, and are not called for more pop-type gigs?

RG: I think to a certain degree that's true. For a long time, as far as doing any R&B or anything pop oriented was concerned, I felt that a lot of the reasons I wasn't getting the calls was because of my exposure playing fusion. I'm sure people were saying, "Don't call him. He'll come in here with two bass drums and play a long roll!"

WFM: Is there a style of music that you haven't had a chance to play on a professional level, but that you would like to?

RG: Not really. I always enjoyed the concept that Weather Report had, which had elements of bop, as well as many different types of ethnic rhythms incorporated into the sound. In that way, Jean-Luc's music is similar to Weather Report's. Lately, Jean-Luc has used ethnic-sounding rhythms, like African-oriented and Eastern-oriented things. However, Jean-Luc's music leans more towards classical than rock, as opposed to Weather Report, which had closer ties to bebop.

WFM: You are regarded as a player with a great amount of technique. In fact, I have read reviews commenting on your technique, especially during your solo in Jean-Luc's show.

RG: Well, to me, good soloing is not really a question of technique. I'm a drummer, but a lot of times I don't care for other people's drum solos. One of the best compliments that I have ever received was from a person who told me that he hates drum solos, but he liked what I did. The reason for that is I don't just go up there and blow

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a lot of chops. Some cats just run down a list of their licks, or they play the same old cliches that everybody does. I try to take myself and the audience somewhere. Chops and technique are a part of it, but how you compose the solo is more important. I try to think of it as an entire statement, as opposed to just a list of licks.

WFM: Are there any players today that inspire you, either as a soloist or otherwise?

RG: When I was younger, I listened to people like Billy Cobham, Lenny White, Narada Michael Walden, and Steve Gadd. To me, most of the players my age who are on the scene now are a product of what those guys did. So there isn't anybody who really inspires me anymore. There are a lot of great cats out there, but as far as inspiration goes, that came to me a long time ago. At this point I'm trying to inspire myself.

WFM: Getting back to technique, as you mentioned before, you play a right-handed kit, but you play ride rhythms with your left hand, a la Billy Cobham and Lenny White. Are you left handed?

RG: I write my name with my right hand, but the first time I sat down at a drumset, I crossed my left hand over my right to get to the ride cymbal. For me, leading with the left hand was just the natural thing to do. When I first started studying, though, I played the traditional way. I did that for about a year. Actually, what I was doing was playing my lesson right handed, and then I would go home and practice it left handed. Then, at the following week's lesson, I would get through the assignment adequately right handed, even though I could play it better with my left. After a year I convinced my teacher that I was better left handed, and I think it was very clear to him by how much more easily I could play that way.

WFM: Do you think that this method of playing gives you any musical benefits over the traditional cross-handed approach?

RG: I think it does. It frees up my right hand so it can go anywhere on the drums while my left plays time. I think it gives me a little different approach.

WFM: Another thing that you are known for is your excellent double-bass technique.

RG: When I first joined Jean-Luc's band, I was using double bass quite a bit. However, most of the gigs I did in between my work with Jean-Luc were on single bass. On Jean-Luc's last album, I was trying to think of some places where I could use them, but I really didn't hear any moments where they would be appropriate. I didn't want to use double bass just for the sake of it. If I can find a place for them within the context of the music, then I will, but I don't want to use them just so I can say, "Look what I did." Now that I've been playing some of these songs live, and hearing them a bit differently, I've been using the double bass more.

The difficult thing with two bass drums is knowing when to use them. If the song is a real aggressive type of tune, then double bass lends itself more than otherwise. Basi-

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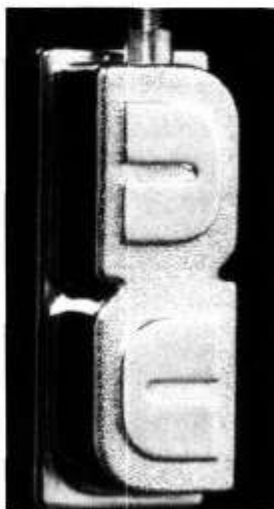


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cally, it has to fit in with the music.

WFM: How did you develop your double bass playing?

RG: I started out by playing alternating 16th notes with my feet at all different tempos. I also would play quarter notes with my hands and feet together, and I kept working on that faster and faster. Then I did the same thing with triplets. I've never really gotten into that thing of playing paradiddles or rudiments with my feet. That *could* sound great, but I never really explored it. It goes back to what I was saying before. It might be technical wizardry, but musically it's kind of *blah*.

WFM: To a lot of other instrumentalists, double bass can sometimes be too much. Does Jean-Luc ever object to them?

RG: No, he never makes a comment about that. That's probably because his background was the beginning of all that. Of course, Louie Bellson was using double bass years ago, but the context that I use them in is similar to how double bass was used back in the early days of fusion. Back when Jean-Luc was playing with Mahavishnu, everything was mega-loud, mega-fast, and mega-aggressive, so he doesn't have any problem with me playing them now. I think he kind of likes them.

WFM: Have you fooled around with any of the double pedals?

RG: Yes I have. I've used the DW pedal from time to time. I've also used the Tama double pedal as well. I think they have a pretty good feel to them. There have been

a lot of times when I didn't have the space to have that second drum. The double pedal is different than playing two bass drums, though. You have to get used to it. The one thing that feels different is when I'm playing something fast with both feet; I can feel the vibration of the head from one foot to the other because the head is moving so much. That takes a little getting used to.

WFM: What types of things do you practice these days?

RG: That's almost a funny question. I don't think I've practiced anything consistently in over three or four years. That's mainly because I live in an apartment. Also, when I'm on the road, I always have somebody taking care of my equipment, so I get spoiled. When I'm off the road, I have to go up to my locker in Hollywood, get the drums, find a place to rehearse, set them up, practice, pack them up, and take them back to my locker. I'm too lazy for all that! It's frustrating because I can't do that every day, and I can't get into a regimented kind of thing. I also work a lot, so that keeps me from practicing as much as I would like. For the most part, all I can really practice are hand things in a dressing room or on my living room floor.

I recently dug out an old Nick Ceroli book called *Speed And Endurance Studies*, which I've been using for ideas for warming up before gigs as well as practicing. It's helped a whole lot. It has sparked my interest again in practicing, because I haven't been into it for a while now. I have been too busy doing other things like playing keyboards and writing.

Normally when I go on the road, I don't practice at all, but my chops don't suffer because I'm playing all the time. Now I want to start taking a lot of books on the road with me, because I have found that I can make a lot of progress on the road, which is something I didn't think I'd be able to do.

WFM: You mentioned earlier that you had to practice a little bit to get your chops back up for this most recent Ponty tour. What types of things did you work on?

RG: It was mainly just working things back up to speed with my hands. I did a lot of paradiddle-oriented things concentrating on speed and making sure they weren't choppy. I wanted to make sure it sounded as if I knew what I was doing!

Jean-Luc's music can be pretty fast. Playing along with him when he solos can demand some good chops from a drummer. He plays a lot of 16th- and 32nd-note triplet patterns, so if I want to complement what he is doing, my chops have to be there. It's just the nature of his music.

WFM: When you are playing behind Jean-Luc during one of his solos, what are you trying to do in order to leave space and yet be supportive rhythmically?

RG: The way Jean-Luc plays, and the way most instrumentalists that I've worked with play, you can tell when they want you to just groove and do a minimum amount of interplay, and you can also tell when they

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want you to nail something with them. I mean, sometimes Jean-Luc will even go so far as to turn around and look at me, and it's as if he's asking me, "Can you play this?" At times it does get into that, which is fun. But the secret really is to concentrate and lock in with the soloist, whoever it is. You've got to make it comfortable for the soloist.

I like working with Jean-Luc, and Stanley Clarke as well, because they both inspire my playing. It's fun to play with people who can do something musically that makes you go "ooh." They're always playing something new, which pushes me musically and makes me grow.

WFM: What does your setup consist of these days?

RG: I'm playing a Tama *Artstar* kit that I've had for a couple of years now. They are the original *Artstars*, not the new *Artstar II*'s. As a matter of fact, they did some custom artwork that I designed for these drums. The design is a combination of red, black, and yellow, in a triangle-diamond sort of pattern. The toms are 10", 12", 13", and 14", and a 16" floor tom. When I got this kit, I also got an 8" and 15" tom as well, but I don't use them all at once in the same setup. To me, that looks kind of stupid. There are two 22" kicks, and a Gibraltar snare drum from Tama, which is a very thick ply drum and sounds really good.

I'm using a different head combination on my drums than I've used in the past. I used to use Remo *Pinstripes* on the top and *Ambassadors* on the bottom. On this last tour I used *Emperors* on the top and *Diplomats* on the bottom. My drums are sounding a lot more open; they sing a little more. As far as sticks are concerned, I'm using the Dean Markley *8R* model, which is similar to the Pro-Mark *808*, but not as heavy.

My cymbals are all Paiste, mostly from the 3000 series. Some of the cymbals are what Paiste calls *Reflectors*, which is a more brilliant finish than the usual *300*'s. They're a little thinner sounding. I have a 22" ride, 18" and 20" crashes, a 13" splash, and two 18" China-types. I have 14" hi-hats. I also have a mark tree.

As far as electronics go, on this tour I'm using an Akai sampler and a Roland *Octapad*. I'm also using the Simmons *MTX 9* for percussion sounds, which I'm using a great deal. I'm triggering some sounds on the Akai from my acoustic snare drum as well. I have a trigger on the bass drum, but I haven't been using it that much.

I'm very happy with the way I've got the whole thing set up. I have a 12-channel mixer set up near me, and with this mixer I have control over what I want to hear. The sound desk sends me a mix of the whole band, and I can control that level. I can control my entire acoustic drumset level, as well as individual controls over both kicks, snare, and hi-hat. I also control the Simmons and the Akai individually, as well as the drum machines. It's nice to be able to take care of that myself, without having to depend on some guy 30 feet across the

stage for everything that I hear. It can be a nightmare trying to get his attention to tell him what you need between backbeats!

WFM: In a way, it sounds as if operating this mixer is more of a challenge for you. Soundcheck must be pretty important.

RG: Actually, it's pretty easy at this point. Everything is set up for me, so all I have to do is just turn up my master and the drums are all there. Whatever fine tuning I have to do as far as EQing the snare and bass drums, I do myself. For me, the only thing I really have to adjust at soundcheck is the overall sound of the band that I'm getting through the monitors, and having the mixer right there makes that easy.

WFM: What are your future plans?

RG: One of the projects that I'm involved

with right now is a band thing that I'm doing with most of the players from George Howard's group. We've been working on getting signed. When we started off, the idea was to play pop/R&B. But we started playing some jazz gigs in town [L.A.], and the next thing that we knew, people were coming out of the woodwork to sign us as a jazz group. So now we're in the process of somehow trying to do both. The jazzier material is very strong, but the pop stuff is very good as well, so it's a matter of seeing if we can make the two work. I'm writing for this group as well, so I'm enjoying that aspect of it, too. As for Jean-Luc, he probably won't be recording a new album until the beginning of next year, so I have a little time for other things.



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Subbing: A Musical Ap

The phone rings, and a drummer friend wants you to sub for him on his steady weekend club date. There's no time for rehearsal, nor time to hear his band. Perhaps it's the leader of a popular local wedding band calling. You've never met, but he needs a drummer tomorrow night, and someone recommended you.

In either case, you've been called to sub with a band that works steadily, with set arrangements on a list of popular standards and Top-40 material—arrangements you've *never* played, with a band you've *never* heard, and there are no charts. Confident, you accept the gig, and you're ready to hit the bandstand for the first set of the night. Now the real challenge begins.

This scenario can be quite unnerving for a drummer. But there are certain things you can keep in mind that will help make the experience a musically satisfying one for all concerned. Let's examine a few.

Listening: The Key Factor

Listening can be separated into two areas: First is the listening you've hopefully done prior to the gig of radio and record-

ings, to familiarize yourself with the pop tunes you should know and that you are almost certain to be called upon to play. This type of listening is essential for any jobbing drummer.

The second, and more important of the two, is the careful listening you simply *have to do* on the bandstand—listening that takes in everything going on around you. Rest assured, a regular working band will have its own unique time feel, a sense of swing or groove (or lack of it), dynamic nuances, and special arrangements that will probably vary in complexity. The point is, you need to focus in on *everything* as early in the evening as possible. The obvious secret lies simply with careful, concentrated listening, and making certain that your playing blends into the total picture.

What should you be listening for? One of the most important areas is band figures and accents, which you want to support. If you've done enough listening prior to the gig, it's not that hard to do on familiar material. It does become somewhat more difficult on tunes or arrangements you're unfamiliar with—but it can be done. We'll talk about that in a moment.

Making the rhythmic figures will usually be well-received by the other band members. It's further indication that you're a listening drummer, and what musician doesn't appreciate a drummer who listens? No one is likely to make an issue of it if you fail to do so, but it's something most musicians will be listening for, even if it's on a subconscious level. It's also one of the best things a first-time subbing drummer can do to please everyone involved.

Listening also involves paying strict attention at every stage of every tune played. Intros are the best place to start. Stay firmly focused on the band member who sets the tempos, and make your entrances with confidence. It's important to project a sense of self-assuredness, even if you're not quite sure of what's going to happen in the second bar!

The same thing applies to endings. Getting neatly out of a tune can be tricky when you don't know the arrangement. Endings may be intricate and varied, or each tune may end in a manner similar to the one before it. Either way, the clear objective is to finish up in accordance with the arrangement as closely as possible, so you'll have to listen and stay alert.

Listening for variations in dynamics is still another area. As most drummers know, they have the power to control dynamics. Play softly, and, assuming you're working with sensitive musicians, they'll have a tendency to play softer. Play loudly, and you'll generally find the band will go with you as well. Keep in mind, however, that in a subbing situation, the dynamics have probably been worked out previously. It's possible you'll do more following than controlling, but there's nothing essentially wrong with that. Better to adjust and blend than to totally ignore. And doing so is still another indication of the sensitivity you want to demonstrate in the subbing situation.

Anticipating

At this point, you may be thinking it's not all that difficult to apply everything said on tunes you know. But what about unfamiliar material? The trick is to rely on your musical instinct and work on developing what I refer to as a "sense of anticipation."

The great Buddy Rich had the capacity to sit in with just about any band and literally accent most, if not all, of the key figures, even though he'd never heard the arrangement before. Buddy had an acute sense of anticipation, an ability to sense what was coming musically *before* it came, and to react immediately when it did. This was only one of Buddy's remarkable gifts, but it's also something that most of us, with practice, can develop to some degree.

Anticipating means utilizing your instincts to sense what's likely to occur musically before it actually occurs. It comes with a lot of listening, playing, and experience. And though it's extremely useful in accenting and filling with the band, it's also most helpful in sections involving changes in dynamic levels, time feel, and tempo.

Another form of anticipating is listening and retaining where certain figures occurred in the arrangement. Experience teaches you that, in many cases, groups of similar figures tend to repeat themselves as the tune repeats, possibly with minor variations. Don't worry too much if you missed it the first time around; it's surprising how often

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Watching For Cues

Another important aspect is staying receptive to cues from the bandleader or another selected band member. They may be verbal, or could come at you in the form of hand or head cues. Regardless, they provide clues to what's happening, or what's about to happen.

Generally, when a fellow band member realizes that you're trying to adhere to the arrangements, that person will go out of his way to supply you with all the cues you'll need. Once that connection has been established, make that individual the focus of your attention throughout the evening. It's particularly important at key points in complex arrangements, or whenever you're just a bit unsure of what's about to happen next.

Cues will get you through those sections that involve breaks, special phrasings, fills, short solos, abrupt endings, and tempo or feel variations. If you're intent on doing a good job, you need to pay careful attention *visually* as well as audibly.

Keeping Priorities In Perspective

Keep in mind that you haven't been hired for the night to impress the audience or other band members. You're not there to display your blazing left hand, unless you're specifically asked to do so, which is highly unlikely in this type of situation.

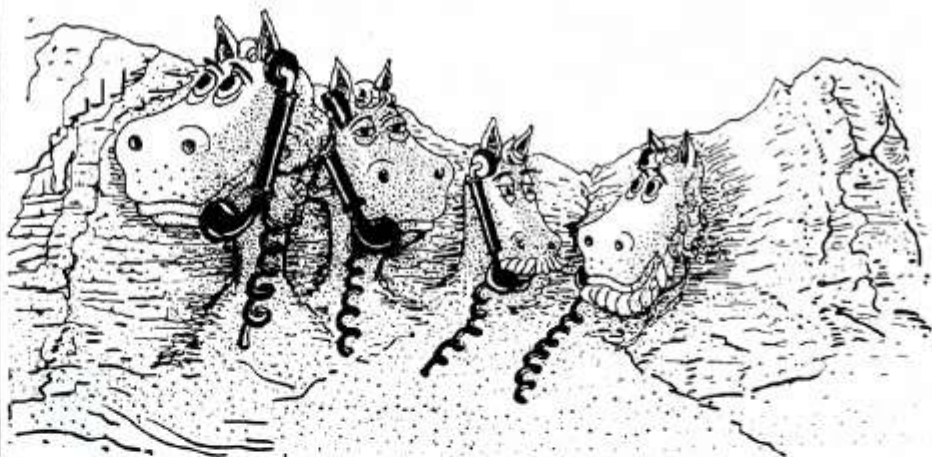
You're there to make it as *comfortable* for everyone as you possibly can—as comfortable as it would be if the regular drummer were actually present. Focus the majority of your energy on making it sound as though you've rehearsed or performed with this band before; *that's the key*. It's amazingly simple, yet equally amazing how many subbing club drummers totally lose sight of it.

Do a good job, and you'll very likely be called back, or find yourself getting favorable recommendations to other bands in need of a sub. Drummers who perform well as subs are often asked to join the band when and if the regular drummer decides to leave at some point. This has been known to occur repeatedly in the music business.

The point is, you make the very best impression as a sub when you take a solid musical approach to the challenge. Absorb the concepts here, and put some of them into practice the next time you're called. I think you'll be rather surprised at how they'll work to your advantage.



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RR: It depends on the song. On this new record, I was anticipating the click in a couple of instances. I found that this really pushes a song, gives it a lot of snap. Other times, I'll slow it down in certain parts and I play a little behind it in a verse, then pick up right on the beat during a pre-chorus or a verse that needs to be lifted up. I'll do that sometimes to highlight an upcoming vocal lead or guitar lead. But it's very important not to walk all over the singer or

the instrument that needs to be featured at that moment.

MD: Any special method you use for rehearsing with Poison?

RR: For a new song that we're hammering out, I'll just play what I feel is basically correct—no tricks, nothing special. Then I'll take that beat and begin to move it around a bit, searching for something that really works. For example, if I'm playing in straight time, I'll begin to wonder what more

snare beats per measure might sound like, or maybe something a little different with the hi-hat. I always try to work around the original feel I had. That way, even if the end result is fairly intricate, it's not something I can't "feel" and play live.

MD: What if you don't "feel" anything right off the bat?

RR: If I don't know where to begin, especially on something new, the other guys usually have good suggestions for me. Besides, if C.C. came up with the guitar riff that's the basis for the song, he must have had something in mind. Who better to look to for suggestions?

MD: Is this back-and-forth work between the band members typical of rehearsing and writing together?

RR: Yes. The reason I'm playing with Bobby, Bret, and C.C. is because I respect and trust them. All of us play enough guitar to get basic ideas across. That's a big plus, and C.C. isn't the type of guy who gets insulted if another member writes a guitar riff.

MD: During rehearsal, do you use a click track or rhythm machine to hold any fixed drum tracks while experimenting with fills and alternate patterns?

RR: I do, but that's usually in the second or third stage of rehearsals. Our first rehearsal is just to get the song out in the open, get the basic skeleton of the song down on tape. If that's not the way the drums are going to go, so what? As long as everyone can play together with that song and get some good ideas. Later, I'll go home and listen to the tape, work out a few solid ideas, and come back and try them. If everyone pretty much likes the direction it's heading, then maybe I'll play with a drum machine and put the song in good solid time.

MD: Practice at home, then, is an important part of making the songs.

RR: It is. After we get some rough basics down, I'll have C.C. or Bobby record a guitar or bass line to a click track, which I'll put on track one of my portable four-track tape machine. Then I'll go home and plug in some electronic drums, and play along with the guitar and bass. I'll mess around with some different beats and record the ones I feel comfortable with. After that, I'll take the tape back to rehearsal and hear what the guys have to say about it. Home practice is very helpful from a personal, creative standpoint. But we do have a rehearsal studio, so when I want to play my live drums, I go there.

MD: Are you a rock 'n' roll drummer or a heavy metal drummer, and is there really any difference to you?

RR: I'm both, but I'm more of a rock 'n' roll drummer. Heavy metal is a little more angry, and I do play like that sometimes. Actually, all rock 'n' roll is a little aggressive and rebellious. It's not for everybody, but then neither is hockey.

[Note: At this point, Rikki's drum tech, Tony Moon, joins the conversation.]

MD: What is the current configuration of the new studio drumkit?

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Moon: The kit is essentially Drum Workshop drums and hardware with Zildjian cymbals. The Purecussion RIMS are great! They isolate the drums acoustically and mechanically from the hardware without drilling holes in the shells. The set is all custom, but since DW only makes custom kits, there's nothing there that isn't "off the shelf." We had the luxury of going to the warehouse and handpicking the shells, tapping them out, and making sure the timbres matched.

MD: Any similarity to the kit for *Look What The Cat Dragged In*?

Moon: No, I think that was one of Herman Rarebell's kits. I wasn't the tech then.

RR: Yeah, it was Herman Rarebell's, from The Scorpions. I had a Pearl kit with concert toms, but they didn't have the control of double-headed toms that we needed for the studio. Since we didn't have the budget at the time, Herman let me borrow one of his sets. It wasn't the right set for me, but it certainly got the job done. The sound definition with this new set is great! A 12" sounds like a 12".

MD: Is a lot of that due to careful miking in the studio?

Moon: Yeah. Duane Baron, our sound engineer, set up all the mic's: one per tom, three on the snare, two on the hi-hat, three on the kick drum, four room mic's, and so on. He was really meticulous, and that's one of the reasons we got such a good drum sound on this album.

MD: How well do you two work together?

RR: Tony is my right-hand man on the stage and in the studio. I drive him nuts at times because I think I'm hearing something different even if the setup is exactly correct. Most of the time my hearing is just off! It's his job to make the sound I want and then to remake it exactly every time I need it. We're like "Master Blaster" in the movie *Beyond Thunderdome*! We disagree and argue, but it ends up being productive. Sometimes I overlook practical or mechanical things. But he never does, and that's what I need.

MD: What about the differences between the live setup and the studio setup? How do you compensate for that?

Moon: I aim for there not being any difference at all, but of course there is. There's no comparison between a rigidly controlled studio and a concert hall. As far as the drums go, I try to make them as studio-perfect as possible. On the next kit, I'm going to try to go with internal mic's, probably the May EA system—409s in the toms, D112s in the floor toms. We'll see what works best, because there really is no "right" way. To be perfect, you really need three mic's per drum in order to reproduce the sound of the stick striking the head, the sound off the bottom head, and the resonance of the shell. And that's not really enough! We could use 28 channels off the drums, but that's just not feasible for a live show. The trick is to isolate the drum sound you want to amplify. External mic's can allow too much bleed-through, and if you

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try to gate it, the reverberations get cut off. With a live internal mic' setup, we will get all the natural resonance and very little bleed-through, and we can choose a delayed gate anywhere we want. The rest is really up to the sound man.

RR: And we don't have much control over that. At something like Texas Jam, where there were about six bands, we were told to set up as fast as possible, play our set, and then get out of Dodge! The sound man doesn't have the time to play with different compressors or gates for each band.

Moon: For situations like that we'll try to pre-fab the sound as much as we can. We'll probably have two complete kits: one for the tour and one that can be flown to any location at a moment's notice. The sound man won't have to worry about mic's; they'll be set up inside the drums. There's nothing to do but hook up the harness.

MD: Any big differences in equipment for the road as opposed to the studio?

Moon: All the hardware is the same. I just carry plenty of spares and tools. The last tour was so rushed I had very little time to prep all the gear. I'm looking forward to really prepping this kit and taking it on the road.

MD: What do you need to do?

Moon: I'll build all my own harnesses and snakes using top-quality materials, check and recheck everything. There will be no doubts or misgivings. If something breaks or goes down, I won't waste time checking over someone else's stuff.

RR: If I go through a snare head halfway through a song, he can throw another snare up and have the original one fixed and tuned before the beginning of the next song. He's fast! Our relationship with Drum Workshop really helps, too. They're a small, American, perfectionist company. I don't mean to drool all over them, but a lot of equipment companies could stand to learn a thing or two from them about support, backup, and commitment—not to mention quality and reliability.

MD: How about trick accessories, microphones, or switches that are great for the studio but aren't reliable on tour?

RR: Some microphones are so room-dependent they can only be used in the studio, and the engineer knows his room best. They'll fiddle around all day or longer just for a snare or cymbal sound; it's that exacting. The road is different that way. Our drum equipment is the same, except for maybe the drumheads, but things like microphones have to cover the most likely range of conditions. A few specific sounds from the studio can be digitally sampled and then triggered out on stage, but I'm always leery of becoming too dependent on electronic switches and triggers.

Moon: Triggering drums live is still a problem. Nobody has really come out with a trigger that's truly dynamic in terms of strike pressure. The closest is probably Reek Havoc's *Drastic Plastic* triggers, which we used on the last tour. Even then, we had to use a safety gate. I've got some ideas for a

magnetic trigger, but...we'll see.

RR: Tommy Lee uses a mic' as a trigger. That's a good way to go, but one that's very complicated and very expensive.

MD: Is the equipment or preparation any different for an outdoor show versus an enclosed concert hall?

RR: The drums at an outdoor show basically sound dead. The sound goes out and it's gone; nothing bounces back, no natural reverb. The only advantage is that all outdoor shows will sound about the same, so we can at least prepare for that. Virtually every enclosed hall has its own unique sound and acoustics. Soundchecks are critical.

Moon: Outdoor shows can play hell with equipment. I've got to be prepared for rain. The heat from the sun can change the tuning. Cables and harnesses are exposed to heat, dust, and moisture. The sound man has the tough job, though. Outdoor shows are not known for their sound quality!

MD: If something's going to break down, what will it most likely be?

Moon: Electronics. All triggers and switches are vulnerable, and I won't even bother with anything that I have doubts about. Still, since an acoustic kit will always make some noise, only electronics are left.

RR: Nicko from Iron Maiden once said, "If the house goes down, the audience will still be able to hear my drums. It may be a weak argument, but that's the way I feel." And I agree. Even if a monitor goes down, I can still hear what I'm playing. It all adds up; reliability builds confidence.

MD: Tell us about the *RoboDrums*.

RR: The best way I can describe the *RoboDrums* is as "a mechanical fantasy become real." Poison is a band to see as well as hear. We always put out for our fans who come to the shows. Even when we couldn't afford it, we tried to add interesting visuals. I've always wanted a more high-tech drumkit, but you know how I like acoustic drums. One day I was watching *The Transformers* on TV, and I got the idea of an androgynous robotic creature, almost a cyborg, made up of drums and toms and cymbals, with armatures that could move things in and out of reach as I needed them. So I threw a few ideas at Glenn Brooks, a friend of mine who builds architectural models and does graphic design. Within a few hours, we came up with a killer drumkit design. A movie special-effects artist, Mark Williams, is building it for me now. We're hoping it will be done in time for our next tour; it's gotta be roadable, though. That may take some testing. The whole concept is cool. It's a drumkit of the future.

MD: What if you were just starting out now?

RR: If I were starting out on the rock 'n' roll club circuit in 1988, I'd have a straight five-piece acoustic drumset for simplicity, reliability, and consistency. For Top-40 bar music, I'd probably go with an acoustic kick drum and have everything else be electronic: Simmons, Dynacord, etc. That way

I could instantly change sounds, grab samples, adapt quickly to all the different styles and sounds. The recording studio is where you set up your "death list," because those are the sounds you'll have to do live. A rock 'n' roll audience doesn't want to see you on stage walking over to a machine and pushing a button! The roots of rock are still so strong—musicians making live music right in front of a crowd!





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Warming Up: Part 2



Photo by Rick Malkin

MUSIC KEY



Warming up is important, both for preventing injuries and for helping you utilize all of your developed technique. Playing the drums is a very athletic activity, especially rock drumming. And like an athlete, a drummer needs to warm up before performing. Warming up is essential for preventing tension, especially if you're a hard-hitting and aggressive player. Tension makes it difficult to play at your best ability level. It will affect your time, the groove, and your coordination when trying to execute technical beats or fills. When you're warmed up, you'll feel relaxed, more coordinated, more confident, and consequently, you will play better.

In "Warming Up: Part 1," I showed you a few exercises utilizing all four limbs. In this article, I will give you more exercises that focus on using all four limbs. I feel it's important that both your hands and feet be warmed up and coordinated together as one unit. If one foot or hand is dragging, it will affect the other limbs and slow you down. You're only as good as your weakest limb.

Exercise 1

The first exercise that I want you to practice is one that focuses on your hands, and at the same time incorporates the feet. Practice the following 13 fundamental sticking patterns with your hands, using the 8th-note rhythm that appears above them. Keep a steady quarter-note pattern going with your right foot.

Hand Patterns:



1. RLRL RLRL RLRL RLRL
2. LRLR LRLR LRLR LRLR
3. RRLR RRLR RRLR RRLR
4. LLRL LLRL LLRL LLRL
5. RLRL RLRL RLRL RLRL
6. RLLR LRLR RLRL LRLR
7. RRLR LLRL RRLR LLRL
8. RLRL LRLR RLRL LRLR
9. RRLR RRLR RRLR RRLR
10. LLLR LLLR LLLR LLLR
11. LRRR LRRR LRRR LRRR
12. RLLL RLLL RLLL RLLL
13. RRRR LLLL RRRR LLLL

Foot Pattern:



Play sticking patterns 1 through 13 with your hands, while playing the foot pattern with your right foot. Keep your heel down when playing this exercise to help strengthen your ankle. Play each hand pattern one time before going to the next line (pattern). Try to go from line to line evenly and smoothly, and be sure to practice this exercise with a metronome or drum machine. The combined hand and foot pattern for line 1 of this exercise would look like this:



Exercise 2

Once you've accomplished playing these hand patterns along with your right foot, you should then practice them along with your left foot. Increase your speed as you get more comfortable with the patterns.

Exercise 3

Now we will change the foot pattern. Practice playing the 13 sticking patterns with the following foot pattern:



Now reverse the foot pattern to begin with the left foot:



When these foot patterns are combined with the previous hand patterns, both hands and feet are playing 8th notes:

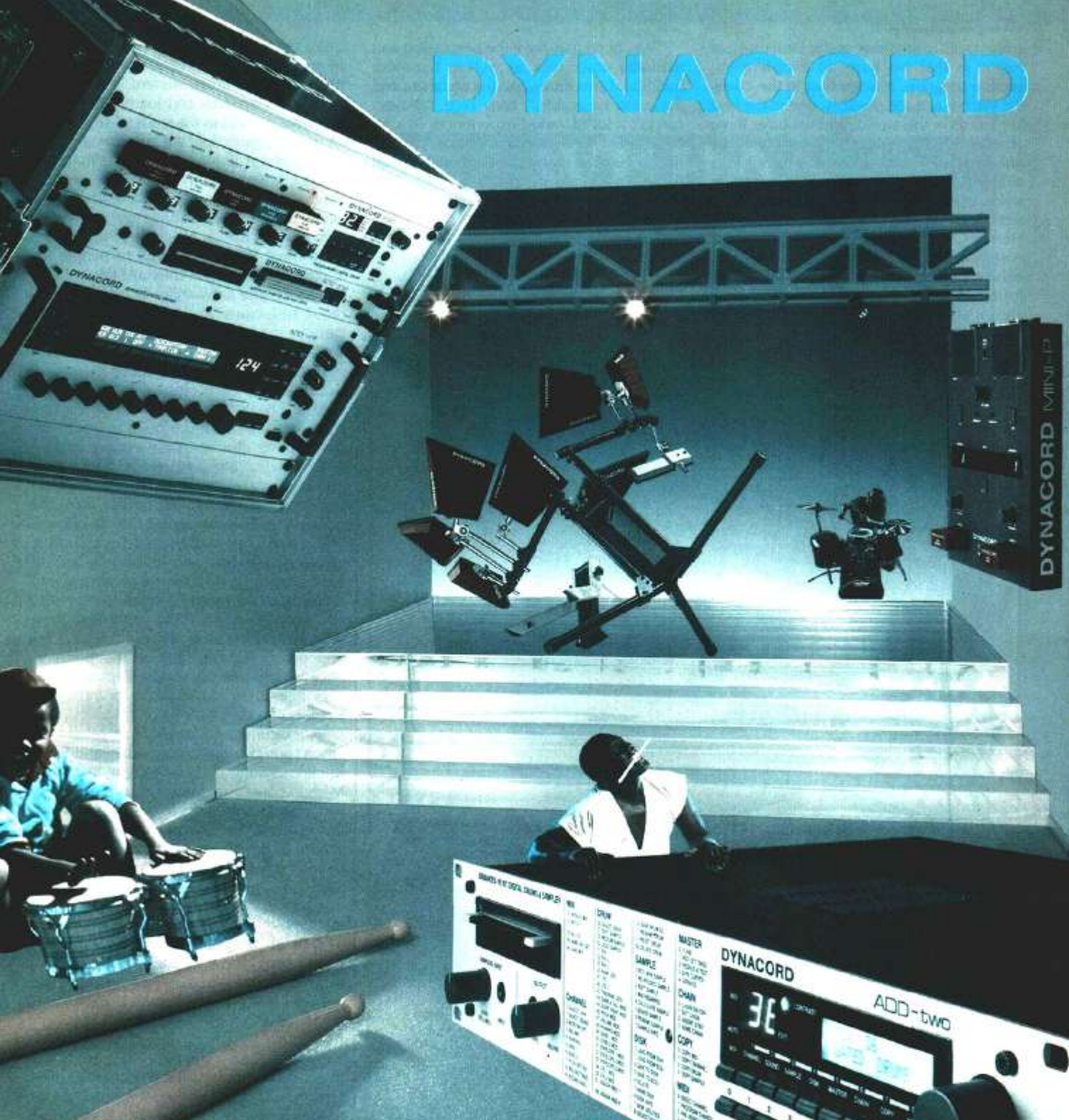


As you move from line to line of the hand patterns, try to make your hands and feet play perfectly together as if they were one sound. Once again, work with a metronome or a drum machine and gradually increase speed. Never sacrifice being relaxed for more speed. Tension is not what you want.

Finally, play all three exercises, one after the other, and at the same tempo. For example, play each of the 13 sticking patterns (hands) once with Foot Pattern 1 (right-foot quarter notes), then Foot Pattern 2 (left-foot quarter notes), and finally Foot Pattern 3 (alternating feet playing 8th notes). Keep repeating the entire cycle for 15 to 20 minutes, and you should begin to feel warmed up.

These exercises, along with those outlined in Part 1 of this series, are only part of my warm-up routine, and represent a basic program for warming up all four limbs. There are many other exercises that you can do to warm up. The routine that you develop for yourself will depend on your own ability, musical style, time constraints, and other factors. You need to experiment and try different exercises that best suit your particular needs. I hope these exercises will help you and inspire you to come up with your own warm-up routine.

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advantages to studying at the University of Miami is that we have an excellent ensemble program. It is the best in the country. We have, quite possibly, one of the best big bands in the world, and we have three others besides, all directed by some of the finest jazz educators. We also have many different groups that specialize in certain styles of playing. We have an ECM ensemble, a Horace Silver ensemble, the Joe Henderson ensemble, the Wayne Shorter ensemble, the Monk/Mingus ensemble, the bebop ensemble, the funk ensemble, the fusion ensemble, and many more small groups that don't specialize in a certain style. All of these ensembles have coaches, ranging from graduate assistants to the heads of departments."

"We, of course, have the percussion and marimba ensembles, as well as the more traditional ensembles like the orchestra and the wind ensemble," adds Fred. "Players can get a lot of varied experiences in a lot of different kinds of music here. I'd also like to mention that it does not matter what degree program a student is pursuing. The players for the ensembles are picked by ability only, at auditions."

"We also have the studio rhythm ensembles, which are an outgrowth of the music engineering department," says Steve. "The music engineering department is such a big part of the university, and they have to have groups to record all of the time." The university has a 24-hour, state-of-the-art recording studio, which is used to train

future engineers as well as give musicians an opportunity to get recording experience. "By recording, drum students are able to listen to themselves and learn what works and what doesn't in the studio," says Steve. "A requirement that we are going to be making of our drumset students is that they prepare a high-quality demo tape of their playing before they leave here. That way, when these students move on, maybe to New York or L.A. or Nashville, they'll have a tape that they can submit to people for auditions. And, since they are down here, they have the advantage of some of the finest musicians available right here on campus to play on that tape."

Other playing experiences at the University of Miami include the school's innovative rhythm section classes. Fred explains, "We have what we call rock class and swing class. When students come in as freshmen, most young drummers have more experience playing 8th-note music rather than triplet-pulse music. If a drummer needs experience in either the jazz or rock areas, he or she can enroll in one of these classes. The classes are made up of keyboardists, guitarists, bassists, and drummers, and at each class these students are combined into different groups, given a week to rehearse, and asked to perform the piece they have prepared for the class. Then the instructors and other students critique the performance in an open discussion format. This is very helpful to musicians in pointing out weak points they may have."

"Rock class is co-taught by Randall Dolahon, our jazz guitar instructor, and Steve Rucker. Swing class is taught by Vince Maggio, our jazz piano instructor. These instructors are masters in their areas. Vince has got a very convincing way of being able to sit down with young drummers who haven't played swing and get them to really cook and work within a rhythm section. He is able to turn some heads toward that type of music."

With all of these playing opportunities mentioned, Fred is quick to point out that there is much more than just playing at the music school. "Every semester, all students are required to play in two ensembles. They may play in three. Some people have wanted to be in four or five ensembles, because all they wanted to do is play. However, that doesn't leave much time for the academic requirements that are a big part of everybody's life in school."

"I think one of the most common misconceptions that new students have is that all they are going to do is play. There's a lot more to attending a university than just playing and practicing. People think that they are going to take lessons and practice eight hours a day. Once they get here, yes, they do have lessons and do spend time practicing, but they have other responsibilities as well. They'll have ensemble music to practice, as well as piano music, music school classwork like theory and ear-training, as well as general university classwork. People don't realize the amount of effort

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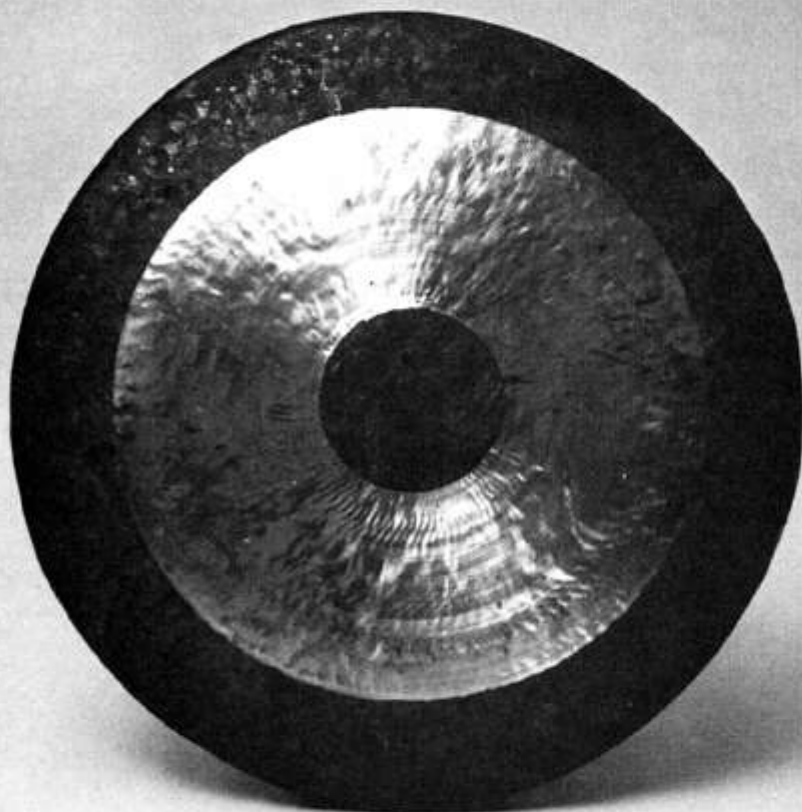
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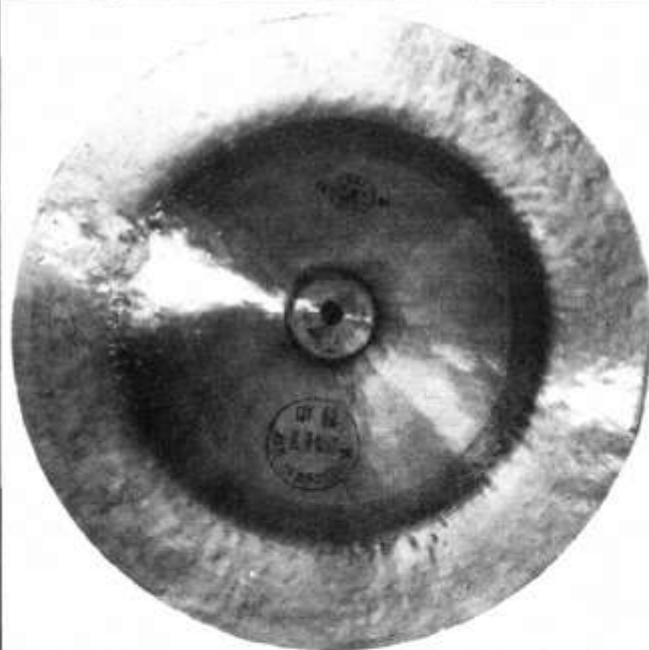
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that they are going to have to put into the academics as well as to the music requirements."

The percussion and drumset students at the University of Miami follow a similar progression of studies while meeting the requirements of the department. No matter what degree a student is pursuing, be it a performance degree or a non-performance degree, that student must graduate with certain performance abilities. According to Fred, "Each student receives four semesters of basic instruction: one semester of drumset, one of snare drum, one of timpani, and one of mallets. During these first four semesters, the student fulfills basic requirements in each area."

When asked if all students study the same

things or are treated on an individual basis, Fred responds, "Students follow a basic curriculum, but you have to make exceptions. The basic curriculum assures the student that he or she will cover all of the material required, which will give a good foundation in all areas of percussion. After that, students are then free, to a certain extent, to specialize in the area that interests them."

"For an example, one of our former students, Rod Morgenstein, went through the Studio Music and Jazz curriculum, and by his senior year, he hadn't fulfilled the mallet requirements. At that time, Vince Maggio, who teaches jazz piano, happened to have an opening in his studio for a student. Since Rod's piano background was so

strong, Vince accepted him as a jazz piano student. I thought that was beneficial for Rod to have that opportunity, so he studied piano instead of mallets. To have some mallet experience, he prepared the second movement of the Creston marimba concerto on his own and played it for me before he graduated! So, in answer to the question, we do have a set curriculum, but we certainly can make room for individual differences within that curriculum."

"Getting back to the basic requirements of the percussion program, the student must cover each of the four basic areas. There is one exception to this. We instituted a drumset specialty track in our performance degree last year. In the past, one thought of applied music as the study of nothing but symphonic or legit training. We have broadened our program so that now students can follow a course of study in the area of general percussion, an all-encompassing program I've called Instrumental Performance Percussion for the 1990's, or they can consider the drumset as their primary instrument in this degree. I feel that having this choice is a more contemporary attitude to have."

Steve Rucker concurs. "Before we had this program, students who were primarily drumset players had to take advanced improv courses in the jazz department on a mallet instrument, which wasn't really fair to them because they were taking the course with horn players, guitarists, keyboardists, and other melodic instruments. All of these other people who had played their instruments all their lives were in a class with drumset players trying to get by on vibes. Fred decided that there should be an improv section for drumset players, and subsequently we designed the drumset major in Instrumental Performance."

"With this degree," Fred says, "we are not requiring people to study mallets, but they have to enter the program with a strong piano background and continue to develop their piano abilities while at the university. I think in this era of synthesizers, perhaps keyboard ability is more important than mallet keyboard ability. The drumset program piano requirements are necessary because we feel that a drummer must have some connection with melodic and harmonic instruments."

"I feel this is important because this is a music school. You don't just study rhythm and drums at a music school. A student has to study music theory, ear training, music literature, and all of the related topics that will make a student a complete musician. It's important for the drumset player of the future to be able to express himself or herself harmonically and melodically, as well as rhythmically. Plus, after spending the time learning so much about music at this university, it would be an exercise in futility to not be able to use that knowledge by just playing drumset."

When asked to discuss the specific requirements made of the percussion student, Fred responds, "I think the best way to

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answer that question would be to track a typical student. Let's start with a freshman, and let's say that he is a Studio Music and Jazz major, for example. My views are different than most percussion teachers at other universities, because most feel that the first thing a freshman percussionist should start with is private mallet instruction. In general, that is usually the weakest area of an incoming freshman percussion student. Our Studio Music and Jazz freshman would come in, and for the first semester, he would study drumset. At that same time, if the student is deficient in mallet skills, he would enroll in a class called Mallet Ensemble. Mallet Ensemble is a course for beginning mallet players, and it allows students to begin to get accustomed to a mallet instrument. So even though we don't begin in-depth mallet instruction during the first semester, we do have a way of introducing mallets to students and getting them started. It's my hope that students will also learn a good deal of general music techniques from their theory and piano classes, so when it does come time to study mallets in earnest, they can concentrate on the technical side of the instrument and already have a knowledge of the proper musical considerations."

Steve Rucker, the person in charge of the drumset program at the University of Miami, is responsible for the first semester drumset class. "I had the freedom to design the direction of this course, so I started implementing a tape-listening situation, and it has since evolved from listening to different styles and the history of drums into topics such as how to play all of the styles necessary to play a gig and function in a rhythm section. At the same time a freshman is taking that class, he or she has a supplemental lesson with either a teaching assistant, Harry Hawthorne, Steve Bagby, or me. In that lesson the student is taught more foundational things, which the student is required to play after the first semester of study. So between working in the class with me and studying privately with Steve, we cover all of the basics and some of the history of the drumset—all in the freshman's first semester.

"I have found that, during freshmen's first semesters, they are

normally disoriented and have a tendency to drift off," says Steve. "We can be there to help them through that initial breaking-in period. I also make it a point to meet with all of them during their first semester. That way I can make sure everything is going okay.

"At the end of the first semester," he continues, "the students have an idea what their weak points are and what they have to work on. Obviously, a person can't totally get that all together in one semester, but most of the students do a pretty good job. At that point in their training, I know I could send them out on a gig and they could cover it."

"During the percussion student's second semester, he would study snare drum," Fred continues. "We still require a semester of snare drum as a sort of levelling process for everyone who comes in. Everybody has studied snare drum at some point along the way. However, I feel that by working with hands and working on reading on the snare drum, we are able to strengthen the student's overall technique. If your technique is together on the snare drum, it's much easier to move to other percussion instruments. Drumset, timpani, or mallet keyboard playing is all enhanced by a proper snare drum technique. While students are studying snare drum during that second semester, they have the opportunity to attend master classes on drumset with Steve. The master classes cover topics such as in-depth style studies of players and more involved transcribing.

"In the student's sophomore year, timpani and mallets would be covered. At that same time, though, the student's drumset playing should have progressed to the point, through private lessons, first semester drumset class, and possibly rock or swing class, to where he or she can take a class in advanced drumset improv and/or play in a more advanced ensemble. So, for the people who are interested in playing drumset, they never really leave the drumset while studying other percussion instruments.

"The advanced drumset improv course, which I just mentioned, is a requirement for the Studio Music and Jazz major, as well as those enrolled in the new Instrumental Performance drumset track. Of course, it's open to all other students by audition. Studio Music and Jazz majors take an improv course with a melodic instrument as well. The jazz faculty doesn't care if it's piano, vibes, or marimba. Most SMJ majors put that one off to their junior or senior year."

"The drumset improv course is a two-semester course," adds Steve. "The first semester is an intense style study. At that point in the students' training, they have already studied the early drumset styles and artists, from Baby Dodds all the way up to the swing era big band players. That is covered in the freshman class. In the first semester of advanced drumset improv, we continue on with Max Roach, Art Blakey, Philly Joe, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and Jack DeJohnette. We cover the players who I think of as the 'big six.' There are other players that I love, like Roy Haynes, but by concentrating on the styles of the six drummers mentioned, we get a pretty well-rounded look into the jazz style.

"We cover the 'big six' by doing transcriptions of their playing. We also analyze the individual characteristics of these players, and we take all of this information and try to learn how to think and play like one of these great drummers. So, we start out by covering Max Roach for a couple of weeks, and for those two weeks the students become Max Roach. And then the next two weeks we analyze Art Blakey, and again, the students become Art Blakey. When I say 'become' Max or Blakey, I mean the student really must try to get inside of these drummers' styles and learn the nuances as well as the major features of these players.

"There is a rhythm section assigned to the class, so each of the students comes in and plays with the rhythm section in the style that we have been studying. By doing this we can see how the student actually is applying what he or she is learning in an actual playing situation. In the later part of the first semester, after the 'big six' players are covered, we do the same thing with the more contemporary players like Gadd, Erskine, and on up through Vinnie, Omar, Weckl, Bozzio, and so forth.

"In the second semester, we leave that approach and concentrate more on individual styles. I start off in a soloistic and time approach with developing motifs, playing over the bar, metric

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modulations—things that are, in a way, building blocks towards becoming a good soloist. We cover dynamics, phrasing, space, and so forth. And there's a lot of playing in this class. This gives me the chance to watch these players carefully so I can recommend things for them to work on. I get to see them play every day. Another advantage to this is that the students have to come to class and play every time the class meets, so this psychs them up to practice. They know that they're going to have to play in front of their peers, so I have found that this motivates the students.

"During the next part of the semester," Steve continues, "we start playing over song form. We cover standard AABA forms, blues, rhythm changes, and then we get into odd forms. The jury requirement at the end of that semester is based on soloing over an unusual song form, which I will pick out of a stack of charts. It's up to the students to be able to sing the tune in their heads while they play it. That way they'll be able to solo over a chart as well as be able to play behind a soloist in a musical way. That's a big part of my philosophy as far as teaching drumset. The students have to learn to be as musical as possible. They shouldn't just concentrate on technique for technique's sake.

"When I first started in music, I was into music as music to begin with. It just happened to turn out to be drums that I picked up. So my approach to playing and teaching is to be as involved as much as possible with music completely. I have a lot of students who are into composition, arranging, and so forth, and usually the people who are the most involved with the total aspect of music are the better players, by far."

Another area of percussion that the University of Miami percussion department is focusing on is electronics, about which Fred Wickstrom has definite opinions: "The use of electronics in the field of drums and percussion over the past few years has really grown. Now, it's wise for everybody to be involved with electronics to some degree. I also feel very strongly that what you learn on acoustic instruments is going to carry over into electronic performance. I think that I can recreate sampled sounds off of my pads, for

instance, in a much more realistic manner because I know how it's supposed to sound acoustically. In that way, I think that acoustic and electronic percussion are really going to complement each other, and that's something I want to get across to our students."

Fred Wickstrom's desire to bring electronics into the percussion program began about five years ago. Steve Rucker explains: "At that time, we started a course here in drum machine programming. Fred was really behind starting up a course in this area, and he coerced the music school into buying us a *LinnDrum* machine. So I taught a course in *LinnDrum* programming. Programming a Linn, or any drum computer, is very simple, really. Almost anybody that is musical can program a drum machine. The thing that this programming course did was to force students to go out and work on projects. They had to completely arrange a tune, and then put together a drum machine program that fit the tune.

"A couple of years later we bought an Emulator *SP-12*, so that we could get into some sampling. Since the *SP-12* is a pretty involved unit, we were able to start getting into MIDI and SMPTE time code and so on. That course has now evolved from a lecture into an ensemble, which we call the Electronic Percussion Ensemble. In this ensemble, we use drum machines, a KAT mallet-keyboard MIDI controller, a keyboard synthesizer played by one of the drummers, and a Simmons electronic kit. And also we have a percussionist who plays a Roland *Octapad* and uses it to trigger a variety of sampled sounds.

"With this ensemble the students don't just come in and play. They learn about programming synths, drum machines, sampling, MIDI, and so forth. Then we combine this information and make music with it. It takes a lot of gear to maintain something like this. We want to stay as current as possible."

The audition requirements for the University of Miami involve a few different things. Says Fred Wickstrom, "Anyone interested in attending the University of Miami should contact Jo Faulmann, Director of Admissions, University of Miami School of Music, P.O. Box 248165, Coral Gables FL 33124. Music Admissions will then

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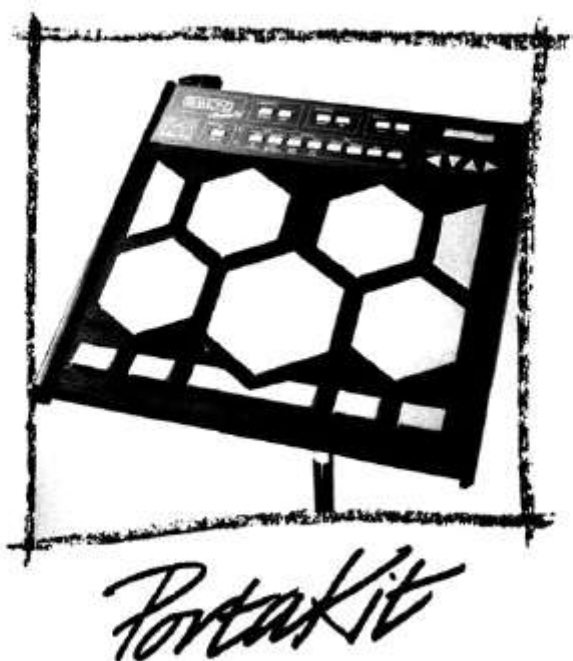
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send a packet of materials that will include instructions on what we want on a music audition, as well as more information on the school. The audition requirements that they will find on there are, in a way, like the curriculum requirements in that the different areas of percussion are requested. There is some snare drum, some drumset, some timpani, and some mallets. We ask that they demonstrate ability in all areas but be strong in two of the four areas. For applicants who don't play mallets, we ask that they demonstrate some degree of piano proficiency.

"At one time," Fred recalls, "I had a student ask me, 'Why do you have these demands on people coming into the university? I don't have to know a thing about medicine before I enroll in medical school.' Basically, the requirements that we have are fundamentals that an incoming student must know. Otherwise, the student will just be overwhelmed by the catching up that would be necessary. All that would do is cause a student to drop out, and that's not fair to the student. We want to have people here who are right for the program and who are going to last in the program."

"In the audition requirements there are instructions on how to submit a taped audition, which allows the student certain advantages. However, I strongly recommend that anyone who is auditioning for our school, or any other school for that matter, visit the campus, talk to the teachers, and probably more importantly, talk to the students. Incoming students should know how they are going to be spending their time. We audition the students, but the students should audition us to make sure that the program is right for them before they think about obligating four years of their lives and countless dollars. Find out what it's all about. All of us here are happy to talk to people and answer any questions they might have."



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Incoming proficiency is an area of concern for many potential applicants. Berklee's reputation for quality might make a few people wonder if they can qualify for entrance. But according to Dave, the situation is not as elitist as some people think.

"When we review an application, we don't have specific cut-offs, as a lot of other colleges might have. We look at the whole picture. That's because Berklee is very different from a traditional conservatory. It's not the type of format where the only thing we're out to do is prepare a student to become a percussionist in a symphony orchestra. So we're not looking at performance abilities quite as much as some other schools are.

"Generally speaking, the board of admissions is looking for students who have had a minimum of two to three years of formal instruction on their instrument, using widely recognized books and study materials. Drummers especially should be aware that a key item that the board of admissions looks at—besides instrumental training—is music theory preparation. We expect a student to have a fundamental understanding of basic music theory, such as melodic notation in both clefs, key signatures, major scales, intervals, chord construction, etc., and to be able to apply that knowledge in writing. When looking at the application from a high school student, the board will be looking for a music theory class in high school, and a good grade in that class—or equivalent instruction on a private basis, or even self-study. It isn't real concrete, of course; there is some subjectivity applied to the process.

"Occasionally we'll see a student who may have had a lot of experience—and might already be playing professionally—but who hasn't really had a lot of formal instruction. The board can take a variety of different directions in that case, including asking for a tape of the student's playing. But there are no specific audition requirements, generally speaking. That only occurs when requested by the board of admissions on an individual basis."

Berklee works on a rolling admissions basis, admitting new students each semester, year-round. Applications for admission are also processed year-round. According to Dave, "Seniors in high school considering Berklee should apply as soon as their senior first quarter grades are available. As long as we have those grades, the board of admissions can review the files. 'The sooner the better' is the general rule, especially for rhythm players, where the competition is numerically greater than for, say, trumpet or string players. Some students submit applications a year or more ahead of time—such as high school graduates who want to work for a year before beginning college. Once they are accepted, they put down a tuition deposit, and that holds a place for them.

"Something that potential applicants should be aware of is that the board does look at overall academic background. This includes high school or college transcripts, and SAT or ACT scores for students applying for a degree program. Berklee is a college, with some very structured classroom environments. A lot of students don't realize that. They think that at Berklee, all they have to do is be able to go in and play. Sometimes a transcript will show that a student just didn't do very well overall in high school—possibly because that student was so involved in music. The board won't look upon that too favorably, because high school grades are an indication of a student's ability to function in an academic environment and to assimilate information successfully. There's more to studying at Berklee than wailing on your axe. We're not out to prepare students just to be performers. There are a lot of other careers in the music field that can also be pursued here."

What can a drummer expect upon admission to Berklee's percussion studies program? Dean Anderson, Chairman of the percussion department, explains the initial procedures:

"When students first enter Berklee, they immediately audition for the percussion department. We then place them in our required drumset lab program, at whatever level we feel is appropriate for them out of the four levels we have. That's a class with four to eight drummers to one drumset teacher. The labs go from very basic technique and reading up to more difficult chart-reading skills. This means that an incoming student must have studied reading to some extent. We have a fairly low entrance requirement as far as reading is concerned, because we are able to

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address that problem immediately. But if a drummer doesn't at least meet that low requirement, he or she isn't going to be here very long. Reading is very important here, because the whole ensemble program functions on how well the students read. Everyone uses charts and leadsheets in the ensembles, no matter what the musical style."

Can a teacher tailor a curriculum to fit the individual student in order to exploit strengths and build up weaknesses? How much latitude exists within a classroom situation?

"We try to let students go as far as they can go within a given course," replies Dean. "We have some safety nets for people who are slow, including faculty tutors to assist students who are having trouble in a given class. We also have sort of a catch-up lab for slow learners—students who have actually failed a course and need extra help. We give them as much opportunity as possible to learn the essential material."

Once into the percussion program, is it possible to major on a specific instrument without having to play other instruments as well? Dean outlines the instrumental major program as it is designed in the percussion department:

"We have two principal instruments: drumset and vibraphone. While the main focus is always on a student's principal instrument, we do expect students to do some doubling. The performance requirements for each principal instrument are very different, based on the program the student is seeking. Drumset principals directing themselves toward performance must also study vibes and the mallet instruments a minimum of three semesters. They also have to perform an improvisational solo on vibes. We don't expect them to be Gary Burton, but they must at least be able to play a head, do some comping, and get through a very minimal chart on vibes. Knowing chord scales and modes would be involved with that. The students will also have to perform at least one tune on their doubling instrument during their senior recital. That can be with a group, or as a solo.

"The other doubling instruments that we expect a drumset principal to study for at least one semester are timpani and general percussion. That all comes from private instruction, rather than group classes. So by the time our students are into their fifth semester—when the private lessons really kick in—they would be getting a lesson on drums, at whatever level was appropriate, and then a second lesson on vibraphone or percussion. There are certain performance requirements that they have to do for the faculty at the end of every semester as a sort of final exam. In that way, we get a constant review of how they're doing.

"Vibraphone principals study mallets all the way along—mostly improvisation. At some point they do have to study the 'legitimate' classical material; they must play Bach sonatas just like anyone else would. They have to study xylophone and bell techniques as well, because those are affiliated with their principal instrument. They might need to double on a bell part someday—in a studio, for instance. The other doubling instruments they need to know are drumset, timpani, and general percussion.

"We're at a point now where we're very close to creating a Latin percussion principal instrument. One of our existing faculty members, Ed Uribe, is very good with that, and we also plan on bringing in another full-time Latin specialist.

"In the ensembles, in which all our students perform, they always perform on their principal instrument. They play in at least two different ensembles every week—usually in different styles of music. We try to give students a complete overall knowledge and understanding of all the percussion instruments, although we let them focus almost all of their own attention on their principal instrument."

Berklee's ensemble program is one of the college's outstanding features, due to the number of ensembles and their diversity. There are jazz, pop, funk, studio, big band, Latin, and rock ensembles, with further variations even within those styles. For example, there is a heavy metal ensemble, a jazz/rock ensemble, a recording orchestra, a theater orchestra specializing in Broadway show music, and ensembles that play arrangements from specific big bands, like the Buddy Rich, Woody Herman, and Count Basie ensembles. Dean Anderson leads the percussion ensemble. All of the en-

sembles are created from groups of students at similar skills levels, and many are duplicated at different levels to give even more students an opportunity to gain experience in a variety of musical styles.

Berklee is, first and foremost, an academic institution, and therefore must maintain certain standards. With that in mind, what is the school's policy regarding students who simply do not demonstrate the abilities necessary to succeed on a professional level?

"Well," replies Dean, "I hate to be so blunt, but we fail those students. It's our job, as educators, to educate. We do it the best way that we can, but if an individual cannot adapt to our system of learning, we have to say, 'Look, you've failed your private lesson for three semesters, and you've never gotten past Drum Lab I. The writing's on the wall.' Students declare their major at the end of their second semester, and enter their third semester in whatever degree program they're heading for. If they select Performance, and aren't cutting the mustard, we let them know that. We encourage them to perhaps seek some other major. Berklee offers majors in Arranging, Songwriting, Composition, Production and Engineering, Music Synthesis, Film Scoring...a host of fields within music other than pure performance.

"Performance majors are generally very dedicated, so a very high percentage of them succeed through the program. But we do have a high attrition rate due to other factors besides failure. Some people have to leave to go to work, others find that they've achieved what they sought before the entire program is completed."

How might Berklee compare to a "vocational" school like Percussion Institute of Technology in Los Angeles, or Drummers Collective in New York? What can percussion students find at Berklee that they cannot find at these other specialized schools? The answer, according to Dean, is "Hands-on experience at playing all kinds of musical styles in all kinds of ensemble situations. When they leave here, they're going to know what it's like to work with a bandleader. They're going to know what's required to survive in just about any musical situation, because they've done it in a group setting here. Besides that, most of the students who go here work outside of the school as well, playing together. So they get a lot of experience in and out of school. Especially the performing majors—they're ready for the world when they leave here."

Preparation for the "real world" is an important element of a musician's education. Yet many academic music institutions have been criticized for not including enough practical information about the music profession in their curriculae. Dean explains what the Berklee percussion department is doing to address that problem.

"It's done first and foremost in the one-on-one situation that exists in the private lessons. Our teachers have been through that 'real world' experience; they are all working professionals right now. They also address questions that are brought up in the lab situations, and those issues are talked about as a group. We also have actual courses that are taught here, such as Gary Burton's very popular course on survival in the music business. Our faculty members aren't academic people who have been isolated on the campus for the past 25 years. Take a film-scoring teacher here, for example. When he's not here teaching, he's writing film scores or doing things for the local TV stations. Everybody here is sort of a 'working model' while they are teaching here. That's why this institution is very 'alive' musically."

Dean is an alumnus of both the University of Miami and the New England Conservatory. This puts him in an excellent position to evaluate how Berklee compares to a nationally ranked "music department within a big university" such as U. of M., and to a "traditional music conservatory" such as New England Conservatory.

"Obviously, Berklee is very different from any of those. Either one of those types of music programs has a very small amount of offerings for a student. There are pros and cons with that. The pros include a lot of individual attention, no problems with practice time, and greater access to facilities. I could practice 24 hours a day in the percussion room at U. of M. if I wanted to, because the number of students was so small. At that time there were eight to



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"At Berklee, we have many students, and they must work very hard to make a name for themselves. I used to see that as a disadvantage, because a lot of students would get lost in the shuffle. But if you really think about what reality is in the music business, *that's reality*. The people who are really going to make it as players, film scorers, music synthesis specialists, or whatever, are going to become known within those areas while they are here. You don't have that situation to the same degree in a large university—at least not in terms of initiating contacts and going out into the real music world.

"The variety of our curriculum is the real key difference between here and anywhere else. We offer classes in every conceivable musical style, and also in electronic percussion, double bass drumming, chart reading, studio drumming and programming, and polyrhythms, as well as mallet, timpani, general percussion, and concert snare drum techniques. Performance styles are covered in all areas and in all contexts. You just can't find that in any other institution. We have close to 700 performing ensembles on a regular basis. Over 800 student, faculty, and visiting artist performances are presented each year. We have seven recording studio environments, a major performance center, two recital halls, and an outdoor amphitheater. The opportunity to be involved as a player, at an appropriately challenging skills level, exists here in a way that does not exist anywhere else to my knowledge.

"In terms of faculty and other instruction, I think it's very important for students to be exposed to a variety of philosophies. We have 14 professors, associate professors, and instructors on staff in the percussion department alone. Then there are all the other instructors that our students will be studying with in their other classes and ensembles. This is a tremendous amount of input just from the Berklee staff. And then we bring in visiting lecturers,

guest artists, and clinicians.

"A state university or college or a private conservatory often doesn't have the opportunity—or the budget—to bring in lots of clinicians to share their state-of-the-art knowledge and their thoughts about what's going on in the real world. A lot of our guest artists are playing in or around the Boston area, which makes it easy to bring them in fairly frequently. We also have affiliations with various companies, including Yamaha, Pearl, Remo, Sonor, Zildjian, and Sabian. We're very happy to have all the support of these companies and to have all these different products here. It's important for the students to see what exists, so that they can compare and get an idea of what's going on. We're able to utilize these associations to further our clinic program. I think it's very special for the students. It's not that they need to be 'wowed' all the time—they need to learn; that's why they're going to school. But there's a certain merit in learning from someone you have a lot of respect for—especially someone who can teach well in the clinic format. The key word is inspiration. Anything that motivates a student to pursue his or her ambitions is very important."

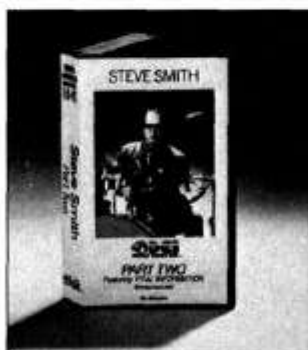
Do some students have a misconception regarding the contribution a Berklee education will make toward their career? Do they often think that they'll automatically get a good gig simply because they studied here?

"I hope they don't *all* feel that, but I imagine many do. Just the school's name and history has added to that. A lot of great players have come from Berklee—as they have from many other schools. It's good that students would be encouraged to *come* because of that, but once they are here, we need to really instill in them the fact that there is a lot to learn. Not just proficiency on an instrument, but also how to act, how to be successful in the business world, how to interact with other people...so many other important things.

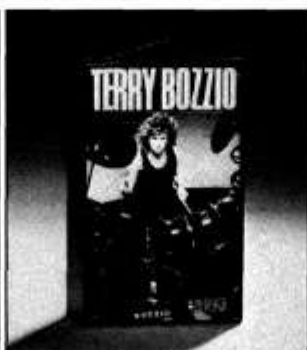
"You have to work to get what you get in this business, and even those who do work very hard have no guarantees. That's a message that we have to give to our students once they're here. We can't offer any promises. Berklee is a starting point. We'll give as

continued on page 115

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Casio DZ-1

MIDI Drum Translator



Sometimes it seems that Casio is the quintessential distiller of musical items. They have a knack for taking an idea, paring it down to its core, and then producing a new product. Casio just seems to be "right there" when it comes to music for the masses. (Just take a walk into any department store and look at all of the mini-keyboards lying in wait.) Some people might even argue that a product line hasn't reached maturity until the "down-scaled" versions have arrived. And so it is, almost as if on cue, that the Casio DZ-1 MIDI drum trigger unit has appeared.

Quite simply, the DZ-1 is a basic drumpad-to-MIDI converter. It may lack a few of the more esoteric features that some competing units offer, but it does offer the one feature that Casio is noted for: It's inexpensive.

The DZ-1 is rather small, and is certainly light in weight. It may be powered from either an external AC adapter or from batteries. Its connections include two MIDI OUT jacks, eight pad input jacks, four jacks for preset selection via footswitches, and a fifth footswitch jack for note switching. The back panel also contains a small adjustment control for setting the unit's master sensitivity. The unit actually has nine input trigger processing channels, which Casio

refers to as "translators." Each translator has its own sensitivity adjustment slide pot. Translators #8 and #9 share the same input jack and sensitivity pot, but are separately programmable otherwise. The fifth footswitch jack mentioned above is used to select which translator (#8 or #9) will transmit when the eighth pad is played. This effect is commonly used to switch between open and closed hi-hat. (Indeed, Casio goes so far as to label input #8 as "HH".) Don't let this fool you though, as this feature can also be used to switch between normal and bell cymbal hits, normal crash and choke sounds, or between just about anything you'd like.

Casio has labeled the remaining seven translators with names like "Tom 1", "Crash", "SD", and "BD". For the most part, these are just suggestions. The one exception is the bass drum ("BD") translator. It is best to put your bass trigger here, as this translator seems to have a slightly different internal design than the others. While I was able to successfully trigger with the kick pedal plugged elsewhere, I received poor results when triggering "BD" with a tom pad. That particular combination gave erratic results and skipped over many hits.

Each translator can be programmed for its own MIDI channel, MIDI program num-

ber, and MIDI note on number. The sole limitation is that all translators that share a given channel number must also use the same program number. While this may appear to be a drawback at first, in some respects it's a blessing. Usually, most sound modules will cut off old voices when program change commands are received. The sonic result of this would be horribly truncated sounds if you ever tried to play a normal drum part.

Programming the DZ-1 is very easy. There is one large button labeled "Edit." By pressing this, you go into edit mode. There are three more buttons for "Channel," "Program," and "Note." Each translator has its own button, as do each of the four presets ("System Select" in Casio's terminology). Since each button also has an LED right above it, you always know exactly what you're editing at a glance. Once you select the proper translator, function, and preset, you can alter the value with the Up/Down buttons. Specific values are reported on a three-digit LED display. You may also select translators by striking the appropriate pad. This will cause the display to flash, and show the transmitted note-on velocity number. This is very handy in setting up the individual sensitivity settings. (Each translator's LED lights up when it's activated by a pad signal, as well.)

In testing, the DZ-1 worked well; it triggered reliably and was consistent. The unit also shows reasonable adjacent pad rejection. (In other words, its ability to ignore false triggers from other pads was pretty good.) The DZ-1 proved to be easy to set up and program as well. Part of this ease has to do with the fact that the DZ-1 is such a "bare bones" unit. There are no provisions for items such as velocity response curves, gate time, layering functions, and the like. The question is, then, "Is the DZ-1 a good buy?" Well, that, of course, depends on your needs. Compared to the Roland PM-16, the DZ-1 offers half of the channels and half of the features at less than half of the price. The major problem in the way of expansion is that the DZ-1 does not include a MIDI IN, so there is no way to cascade two units for 16 inputs (short of purchasing a MIDI blender). The DZ-1 does offer good value to those just getting started in MIDI drumming, and to those with more modest kit requirements. The suggested retail price is \$229.00



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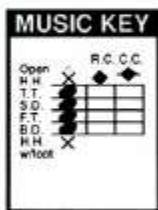
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Mastering The Fill



In the last article in this series (June '86), we looked at various counting exercises related to playing dotted quarter-note figures, phrases of odd lengths, and constant and changing time feels. We also stressed the importance of counting out loud, as well as the proper use of the metronome. In this article we'll look at the use of fills to set up the figures that we have discussed. We'll begin with a specific method to help you master short fills, and then consider a few alternative ideas designed to act as catalysts to stir your own creativity.

In previous articles of this series, I stressed the importance of a left-handed stroke on the snare drum placed on the beat immediately preceding a figure. Doing so clearly states the time and better enables the other members of the band to play their figure (on "an") more precisely. However, the proper use of fills is another excellent way to set up a figure and also contribute to the musicality of the piece. The specific fills discussed in this article do not necessarily end on the snare drum. However, they do end on the beat immediately preceding the figure.

The choice of any particular fill will vary widely depending on the individual player, figure, groove, tempo, volume, and so on. However, remember these points: The fill should always complement the music and aid the band by setting up the figure. Be sure to choose a fill that fits the style of music. For instance, a swing fill would not be appropriate for a funk chart. The fill and figure must be played precisely. Time will always remain the drummer's most

important function, and the fill should never interfere with the time or the flow of the music.

Let's begin with a short fill. This figure shows how a fill would be indicated on a drum chart:



This fill begins on beat 4 of the first bar and ends on beat 1 of the second bar. The fill must end on beat 1 of the second bar in order to set up the figure properly. The length of the fill has been predetermined. However, a large degree of freedom is given to you as you choose the precise fill to use. You must now focus your concentration on improvising as well as counting, playing time, and reading the figure.

Before you try to improvise a fill, choose a specific and relatively simple fill. This will make the whole procedure much easier and also serve as a good foundation. The next figure shows an appropriate rhythm for a swing fill (a triplet) played on the snare drum.



Repeat the exercises from my previous articles, using this fill to set up each figure. Each fill must end on the set-off note, which is one beat before the figure. Keep your eyes moving, and always look ahead in order to know when to fill properly. Begin slowly, and then gradually increase the tempo. Keep the time constant and count at all times.

When you feel comfortable with this method of filling, experiment with a fill of your own choice. Altering the prescribed fill with the use of accents, embellishments, varied rhythms, and different drums can lead to seemingly countless variations. The following fills represent only a small portion of the many possibilities.



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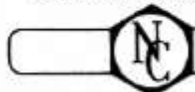


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STRIVING FOR ACOUSTICAL PERFECTION

by Gil Graham



When two or more figures are written close together, you may find that playing a fill for each sounds too busy and cluttered. This example shows two figures relatively close together:



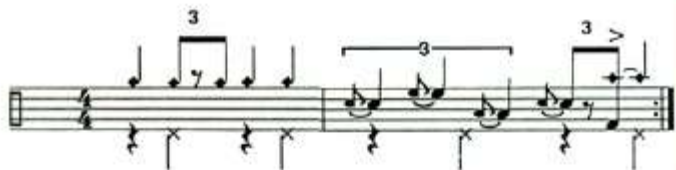
There is ample room in front of the first figure to play whatever fill you choose. The second figure, however, requires a more simple method. Using a fill for the second figure would sound too forced and distracting. When you encounter this situation, simply use one or two strokes rather than a fill to set off the second figure. The next example shows only two strokes on the snare drum used to set off the second figure:



The following example shows how a longer fill would be indicated on a chart:



This fill is the appropriate length for the figure:



Repeat the exercises from previous articles in this series, improvising some longer fills when the opportunities arise.

At this point in my teaching, I always try to re-emphasize objectives in order of their importance. Time, taste/musicality, and figures will always remain more important than your fills. When you use a fill, you must never become so preoccupied with the fill that you lose sight of your primary objectives. Often what is not played on a chart can be more important than what is played. Some charts are so cluttered with figures that playing everything would sound too busy. At fast tempi, or when sight reading even at moderate tempi, attempting an intricate fill clearly becomes risky and jeopardizes the time and the flow of the music. A good rule of thumb is: When in doubt, leave it out. It is far better to omit a fill and/or figure than to lose the time.



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Visual Learning

A famous tennis coach tells the story about his early efforts to teach one of the most complicated skills needed to play tennis: the serve. As the story begins, the instructor, with youthful zeal, sets out to teach his students—in a *really* thorough manner—how to serve. He makes notes on every vital aspect of the serve, listing each point in order of importance. He finally comes up with a list of more than 25 critical points involved in a successful serve.

The coach now begins to instruct a group of students. When it comes time to teach the serve, he tells everyone, "Really pay attention. We are going to learn something that is most difficult!"

The first person steps forward. The coach, carefully checking his notes, begins with his carefully worked out verbal instructions: "Watch your back foot! Careful with the ball toss! Get your racket back! Extend your arm! Watch your grip! Careful with your balance! Hold the racket steady!"

Slowly the coach realizes that he has

paralyzed the student with an endless stream of suggestions. The harder the student tries to follow the instructions, the more tense he becomes. The coach has been guilty of over-teaching; it would take a computer to remember and sort out all of his instructions.

In frustration, the coach grabs the racket and says, "Just watch me, and do what I do." The student watches carefully a few times, then steps up and hits a pretty good first serve. At this point, the coach realizes that a picture *is* worth a thousand words ...even a mental picture (*especially* a mental picture, I might add). This famous coach now teaches visually; he no longer issues a stream of verbal instructions. He understands the value of creating a "mental picture."

We've all had the experience of listening to a great drummer on records and saying, "What is that he just played?" or "I wish I could just see what is really being played!" One of the great things about the era of the jazz club was that you were close to the band. You could watch the world's greatest drummers up close. You could make your own "mental pictures" of the evening to learn from later, fixing certain movements firmly in your mind. You could then rerun the evening over and over again, remembering and reinforcing the images and mental pictures.

There are fewer clubs today, although they do still exist. But today we also have videos. You can watch and learn from many of the world's best drummers in the comfort and privacy of your own home. The video is the "next best thing to being there." The current crop of instructional videos is probably the most educational so far. The educational accomplishments in the video field have been very helpful to students who live far from a major city. At least these students can see the best in action, and learn something as well.

Another benefit of the VCR is that you can tape concert performances and watch them again and again. This gives you another opportunity to study the world's best players. It gives you the opportunity to make those mental pictures that are so important for improvement.

A good mental picture is an important learning tool. You can also make your own mental pictures of yourself. If you have a big concert or audition coming up, try to picture yourself in the situation. Imagine that you are doing well in the situation. See yourself as calm, collected, and prepared for success. See yourself performing well. Then see people complimenting you on a good job. This mental picture will help you perform with more confidence. A word of warning: A good mental picture will *not* take the place of practicing or preparation. There is no substitute for doing your homework. Think of developing positive mental pictures as just one part of your homework.

One of my students brought an album to his lesson. He wanted to know what the drummer was playing on a blues shuffle. The shuffle pattern the drummer was playing was relatively simple but very effective. I showed the student the pattern, and he said, "Is that all? It sounded like much more!" It sounded like more because of the total musical effect. The drum part was not complicated, but it was appropriate. "Seeing it" made it much more understandable to the student.

This is why it is important to get out and "see" good drummers. Records are a great help and great to practice with. However, seeing and hearing at the same time is really the best of both worlds. If you can see *and* hear, the images stay with you much longer. By remembering and rerunning these images and pictures, you reinforce them again and again. In this way, they can become a source of inspiration for years to come and that you can draw up at any time.

I was fortunate enough to see some of the late greats play in person: Gene Krupa, Jo Jones, Buddy Rich, Zutty Singleton, Philly Joe Jones, George Wettling, and many others. I still carry my mental pictures of these great drummers next to my heart. Because of this, these great drummers are always with me.

Make some of your own mental pictures, and make sure they are positive ones. After all, they are your pictures. What you see is often what you get!



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Sure, the big boys can get those sounds because they command those big salaries. Since I can't get that big bank loan and I don't have \$10,000 laying around the house, I might as well forget it and just stick to my trusty old acoustic set, right? Wrong! The secret of success is knowing what does what, and for how much, and how to get the most out of any one piece of gear that you can add to "your system."

My adventures started when I bought my first drum machine about three years ago. I started with a very basic machine: a Korg DDM-110. Two months later I moved up to a Sequential Circuits *Drum Traks*. Fortu-

nately, the band I was in at that time proceeded to get heavily into sequencing, and I gained an amazing amount of "on the job" experience. If you can't find the answer in the manual, or from a friend, book, or magazine, don't hesitate to call the manufacturer. The people at Sequential Circuits were extremely helpful.

My first lesson? Those beautiful, wonderful-sounding acoustic drums I had couldn't compete with the high-quality sounds of the drum machine, which was going through the board (and back to me via monitor).

Luckily, the band had Christmas break coming up, as we were on the road at the time. So I scrimped and saved up a down payment, and got a six-month loan of \$1,000 from my local bank. With this I bought a Peavey 701R seven-channel mixer, a small rack, and a Peavey CS 400 amplifier. The bass player donated a 15" speaker cabinet to which I added a small horn with a passive crossover. I borrowed some microphones, and *voila!* I now had both the acoustic drums and the drum machine sub-

mixed by me and going to the main board on one line (Submix A), and the drum machine going to its own monitor system on the other (Submix B) with *plenty of power*. (Be sure to have enough power to give drum machines or electronic drums the needed "presence" on stage.)

That kept me *very busy* for a while, not to mention very excited by the sound I was achieving. At that time, the only change I made was to trade in the *Drum Traks* for a Sequential Circuits 420 TOM. The reasoning behind this was that I was able to add extra sound cartridges and expand the memory of the 420 TOM to 10,000 notes (quite a bit for that price range at that time).

Everything was fine until I discovered the Yamaha SPX-90 Digital Programmable Reverb. Whoa! Did this unit really do everything to the drums I was hearing? Yes!

Well, needless to say, I started wheeling and dealing. My loan had been paid off for a while, so I put \$200 down at a local music store and made payments. Eureka! This baby was mine. Today there is the Alesis *Midiverb* and several other effects

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On A Budget

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While I had the SPX-90 home learning and tweaking, learning and tweaking, I had a brainstorm. I deduced (remember, I'm "only a drummer") that if a drum machine can "talk" (via MIDI) to a keyboard, and a keyboard can "talk" with the SPX-90, there must be a way for the drum machine to "talk" with the SPX-90.

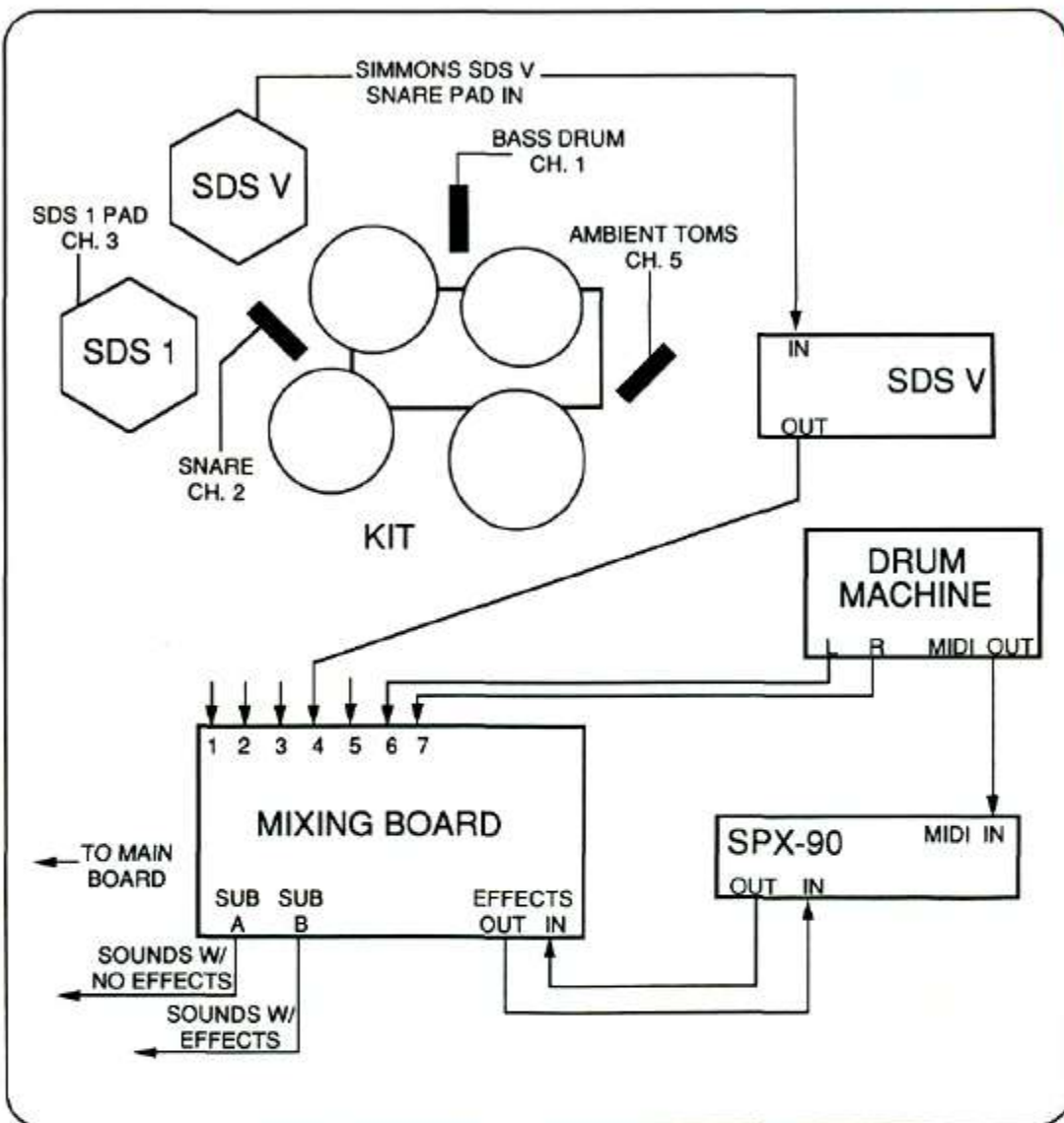
In about 20 minutes I found the right MIDI mode, and programmed 15 "empty" songs (numbered 31 through 45) on my drum machine. Each of these consists of one empty pattern that simply loops. The SPX-90 has been programmed to read these and call up its own reverb programs 31-45, respectively. Ta-dah! No more reaching down in the dark on stage trying to call up the correct reverb program. My drum machine is now also my "MIDI controller."

Since I wanted a nice, big, fat bass drum (acoustic or drum machine) with no effects, but I did want effects on everything else, I was facing two problems. One, the acoustic bass drum channel was weak without the extra gain from the effects loop of the board. Two, my drum machine does not have individual instrument outputs—only left and right stereo outs. The solution:

The bass drum and hi-hat on the drum machine are panned to the left output. This goes to channel 6 on my mixing board with no effects. That channel, along with channel 1 (the acoustic bass drum), is then panned to Submix A for the main board.

Everything else on the drum machine (for which I want effects) is panned to the right output, which goes to channel 7 on the board. This is panned to Submix B, along with the acoustic snare and tom mic's. With all my effects panned to Sub B, and with Sub A set a little bit hotter, the result is a nice, fat mix of both "effected" and "unaffected" sounds. Mind you, I'm able to do this because we run our own P.A. in mono.

I have since been able to go further, due to the interest of the band I'm in now. They had a Simmons SDS1 pad when I joined,



and later took money out of the band profits to pick up a used SDSV setup. I now run the SDS1 pad (with an eight-chip expander) to channel 3, and the SDSV to channel 4. I'm only using the snare pad from the SDSV in order to keep the actual drumset compact. I'm now in the process of building some inexpensive triggers so I can trigger the Simmons toms off of my acoustic toms and avoid adding more pads to the kit. You see, most of the stages I play on are very small, but I'm still afflicted with "GGs" (Creed for Greater Sounds).

Now, I do admit, I have invested some money over the past couple of years: approximately \$3,500. But I was able to do it piece by piece, and each item was carefully considered in terms of the greatest potential to answer my needs. I now have a powerful, fully processed acoustic sound,

digital drums and percussion via my drum machine, and analog electronic drums. And I get it *all* for roughly the same price as *one* top-of-the-line drum machine. When you only make \$300 a week on your gig (if you're lucky), that's tough to beat.



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Portraits In Rhythm: Etude #15

Snare drum rhythms in 6/8 time are usually associated with marches. Marching music generally has an emphasis in either duple or triple feeling, and it is much easier to write the triple feel in 6/8 time than by using triplets. Etude #15, however, has very little to do with marching music. The opening measures suggest a rhythm that is actually very uncharacteristic of normal 6/8 music. The rhythms are very syncopated and produce a contemporary-sounding exercise. Another interesting feature of this exercise is that it uses the three types of snare drum rolls: the tied roll, the untied roll, and the crush roll. More will be said about this later.

Because of the nature of the rhythms, very little phrasing is possible. Take the first two measures, for example: In normal 6/8 music, each measure might be played as one phrase. Notice that the second measure begins with a tied note. This effectively removes the possibility of phrasing both measures equally. What should happen here is that the first two measures will be played as equal notes.

Since this character of tied notes is consistent throughout the piece, every time these measures are played, they should have equal phrasing. Musical elements such as accents, flams and drags, crush rolls, tied notes, dynamics, etc. all affect the performance of phrases. They affect phrasing to the extent they determine where the emphasis will be in the measure. The easiest music to add phrasing to is continuous rhythms without the use of any ornamentations.

Observations

1. The opening theme is played as equal notes; avoid the tendency to rush. The placement of the second note in the second measure is the most crucial. Since the first note in the second measure is tied to another 8th note, there is quite a bit of silence, which produces this tendency to rush.

2. In measure three, notice that the roll is followed by a drag. Remember, a roll cannot be tied into a flam, drag, or four-stroke ruff. There must be a break after the roll to set up for the drag. Some composers inadvertently tie rolls into these rudiments, but in fact this is not practical. Do not end the roll with a single stroke; this will add another rhythm to the measure. Think of adding a rest just before the drag.

Incorrect



Correct



3. The last two measures of line three use untied rolls. In snare drum writing, it is unclear whether a composer actually intends for the roll to be untied, or if it is simply an error in notation. In most of the classical orchestral literature, the player cannot depend on the notation of tied and untied rolls. For the most part, the composers did not tie rolls even to another roll, but the musical consideration in most cases would be to tie the rolls together or into a single note.

Although this problem still exists in contemporary snare drum writing, it is to a much lesser degree. In books such as *Portraits In Rhythm*, where both tied and untied rolls are used, the composers usually have thought this out and indicated their preference. In this particular case, because the roll is not tied into the following 16th note, the note after the roll is more exaggerated—and this is the intention. When a roll is tied into a single note, it is easy for that note to sound as part of the roll; it will then lose its rhythmic effect.

4. Line four begins with a series of single notes and crush rolls. The normal notation for a crush roll is to place a dot above the roll as indicated. In effect, all rolls that must be played very quickly and are not tied will be played as crush rolls. The crush roll is executed by pressing both sticks on the drum head simultaneously. This produces a very short roll sound that can be played quickly. A crush roll has no definite length, therefore it doesn't matter what the value of the note might be. So, in effect, a dot over a quarter note or 8th note will be played as the same crush roll.

Interpretations

1. The last measure of line one has a short *crescendo* and *decrescendo* roll. To effectively make the first roll sound from piano to *fortissimo* in such a short span of time, open up the roll as it gets louder. Start the roll as a closed multiple bounce, and quickly broaden the strokes to a rudimentary roll. The *crescendo* is easier to produce with an open roll. Conversely, for the second roll, which goes from *fortissimo* to *piano*, start the roll as an open roll, and increase the bounces as it becomes softer.

2. The third line begins a series of dotted-16th notes. All the notes in the first two measures are of the same length. This is a typical example in snare drum writing when it is advisable to play all the notes with the same hand. Remember, in orchestral snare drum writing, the sound and control is of prime importance. Using one hand for similar notes or patterns allows the player the most control and consistent sound on the drum.

3. The *diminuendo* going into line seven ends with a dynamic of four *pianos*. The passage already begins very softly with two *pianos*, so this is telling the player to get as soft as possible—almost imperceptible.

4. The last measures of lines three and nine contain 8th-note rolls. Do not play these rolls as crush rolls, as we did with the dotted rolls in line four, but play them as untied rolls. It should sound a bit longer than the crush roll, and should be played in an alternating manner.

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f *p* *cresc.* *f* *ff* *mp* *f* *mp* *dim.* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *p* *cresc.* *fff*

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contemporary things. I learn a lot from them."

"My favorite thing about North Texas," adds drumset teacher Henry Okstel, "is the students. The majority of them are there for one reason: They want to learn. They're very eager to practice, and they have a lot of energy. Even if you've been teaching all day, that last student demands as much enthusiasm from you as the first one."

The practice room situation is one that all the students praise. There are enough rooms for each student to have his or her own room, complete with a key. Unlike most schools, where students must sign up for two-hour slots, students at UNT can practice whenever they want, since the practice buildings are open at least 18 hours a day. "You don't have to set your stuff up each time, practice for a little bit, and then tear it down for the next guy," explains Jeff Falcone. "You can just walk in and start playing, because your drums are set up and ready for you."

The practice room setting is also ideal for the informal exchange of information between students. "There's such a concentration of the best players in the country that you can't help but learn from what's going on in the practice room across the hall. You're sitting there practicing, and you hear some guy in the next room who sounds like Steve Gadd, so you go in to see what he's doing. He shows you, and then you show him what you've been doing," says Brad Wagner, the One O'clock drummer in 1976 and currently the Assistant Principal Percussionist with the Oklahoma Symphony. "It's surprising to learn how much you don't know. For example, I, like most students who show up at UNT, thought I was going to walk right into the One O'clock!"

"The One O'clock Lab Band." There—it was just mentioned again. It is one of the most identifiable and well-known aspects of the school. What exactly is it?

North Texas' jazz studies program consists of nine lab bands, seven reading bands, and several dozen small groups. Each lab band is named for the hour that it meets; however, they are not all equal. The most famous, as well as the most prestigious, is "The One," followed by the Two O'clock, Three O'clock, etc.. The first two bands have only one drumset player each, while the remaining seven bands rotate two drummers each between a Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday schedule. Each reading band also has one drummer, making a total of 23 drumset players. (Each of the lab bands also has one percussionist.)

The three-stage auditioning process starts from scratch each semester. The three-judge panel consists of Ed Soph, Ron Fink, and Henry Okstel, along with input from the band directors themselves. The 80-plus drummers who are interested are given a five-minute sightreading audition. Those who can't read don't make a band, and soon the number of drummers is down to 50 or 60. They are auditioned again, this time a combination of sightreading and unaccompanied solos in different styles. Once again, many drummers are sent back to the practice room for more work.

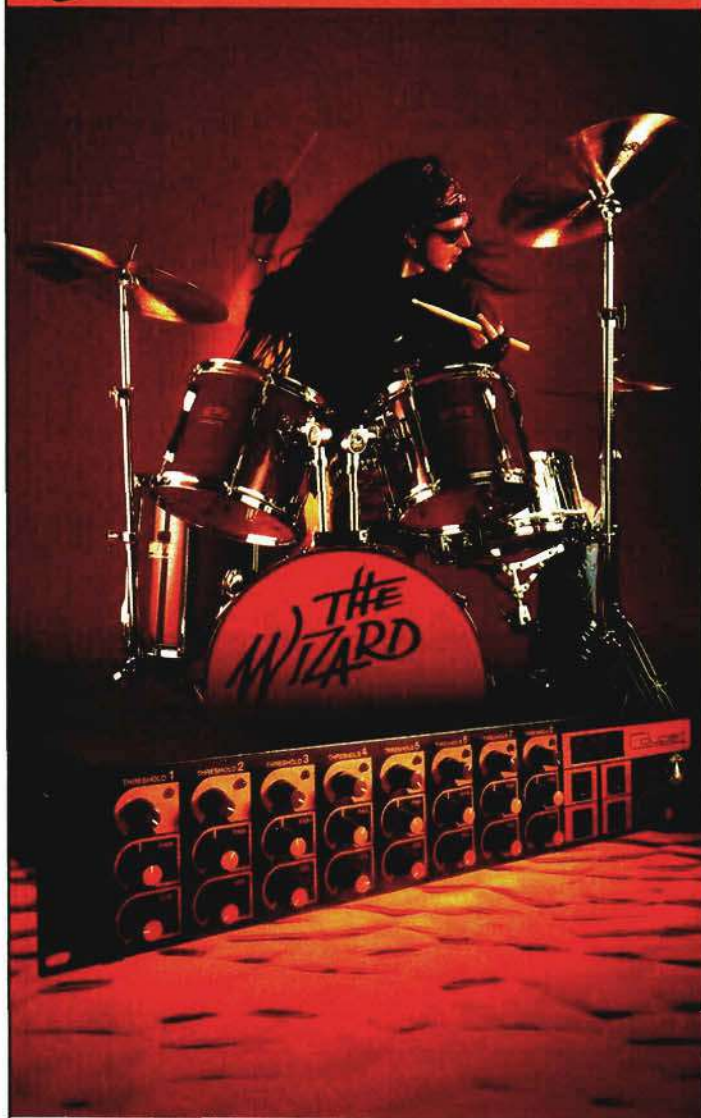
The remaining 33 drummers then audition with an actual lab band. The panel hears 11 drummers a day for three days. Ed Soph continues, "Then we get together and pow-wow to decide on the placements, which are by no means ironclad. Someone may have a great audition, but when he gets in the band, things just don't click with the rhythm section, so adjustments are made. But generally it's a very democratic situation." And while many drummers dream of playing in the One O'clock Lab Band, Ed states, "It's an honor in a way, but the best player gets the best band—just like the real world. The competition is quite fierce."

Henry Okstel adds, "Ideally, the person in the One O'clock would be the best drummer. He or she would play with a real good feel, know all the styles, and could read anything very quickly. Those would be the main aspects."

There are plenty of playing opportunities in Denton, both on and off campus. As mentioned already, the university offers numerous ensembles for the students to perform in—23 drummers in the lab band program, three traditional percussion ensembles, several ethnic percussion ensembles, and too many small ensembles and groups to count.

"This is definitely a performance school," states Randy Drake.

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He speaks from experience: Prior to joining the teaching staff four years ago, Randy was a student at UNT, including a semester in 1983 spent as the drummer in the One O'clock. "You can play a lot here in Denton, both in and out of school. Students get together and just jam. And that's real important. Everyone plays as much as they can."

"The best thing for me," says drummer Earl Harvin, "outside of the actual academia of the school—which is very good—is just the environment. Being around so many other drummers and percussionists allows you to bounce ideas off of a lot of people. There are people here who are just totally opposite of where I'm coming from, which gives you a different perspective. That's the greatest thing about the school. North Texas may not be for everybody, especially those

people who get here with no direction or goals, but it was the perfect thing for me."

One of the most popular ensembles for drummers of all styles is the marching drum line. This past fall, Dan Wojciechowski masqueraded as a wild rock drummer (complete with long-haired wig and sunglasses!) playing "Wipeout" on a drumset on the field. Another famous alumni of the UNT drum line is Gregg Bissonette. During a recent visit to his alma mater, Gregg sat in with the drum line to "have his chops checked." Bob Schietroma elaborates, "The drummers find that there's a high level of muscle development, which can be very practical. It's very corps-style patterned, but we don't turn them into machines so that they can't be strong individually. We're not trying to hamper their playing or conform their style to one that's not going to

be conducive to playing a drumset."

Besides playing in Denton, there are also countless opportunities to play in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and surrounding areas. From regional orchestras, to private parties, to entertaining in various nightclubs—there are enough performances for everyone.

Dan Wojciechowski remembers everyone asking him what lab band he was in when he first arrived. "I couldn't understand until I was in the One O'clock and started getting a lot of calls. There were certain gigs I did in Dallas that I could have played when I was in another lab band, but I just didn't get the opportunity."

There are also times when groups are looking for just the right drummer, and call the school for advice. Upon a recommendation, freshman Tiffany Smith recently joined the rock group Climax, who was specifically looking for a qualified female drummer. Bob Schietroma advises his students to take all available gigs. "You never know who you might be playing with. The guitar player may be a producer at a major studio. I subbed for someone at the Petroleum Club, and the piano player on that gig turned out to be one of the major studio writers in Dallas. Now he uses me on all his jingles. You should always play in your most professional and proficient way, whether it's a wedding or a studio session, because you never know who you are playing with or playing for."

With so many music schools across the country, why would a student choose North Texas? "If you're a musician," answers Schietroma, "you go where you can play with the best musicians in a learning situation. That's what exists at North Texas. We have outstanding keyboard players, bass players...the list is endless. These musicians come from all over, and they really share a lot of their talent with one another. You need those people to play with because you can't grow in a practice room."

"A lot of people come here thinking this is the answer, and in a way it is. But they have to have made the commitment that they're going to be total musicians. Sometimes I suggest to students to go to a trade school if drumset is the only thing they want to do. North Texas is a school of music; drumset is an extension of the percussion program, and jazz is an extension of the music program. Our orchestra and band programs, as well as our total percussion program, are quite strong, and they have grown out of our total music commitment. We didn't put all of our eggs into the jazz basket. It's just another thing that we do well."

Ed Soph has his reasons for recommending the UNT music school. "First of all, it's cheaper to live here than in New York or Los Angeles, and the standard of living is higher. Secondly, the quality of instruction, to my mind, is better. There are so many opportunities to play. The emphasis is on musical concerns rather than the appearances of being a musician. Take that for



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what it's worth. The curriculum here is hard, and if you don't make it, you're out; it's that simple. And it prepares you for what it's really like when you get out there to make a living in this business. You have an advantage, not necessarily because you made it at North Texas, but because you made it yourself, period. You have the self-discipline and inner structure to accomplish what your goals are. That's the whole thing right there."

"Musicians come to North Texas to get a full education in terms of playing with small combos and big bands, and studying improvisation—along with getting a degree, which they can use in the future," says Henry Okstel. "The trade schools are basically drum lessons, and they don't have the resources found at North Texas."

Several of the students in the music school had considered other schools before they decided on coming to Denton. What were some of the factors involved? "A friend had invited me over to his house, and he played the recording of Lab '75," recalls Randy Drake, who grew up in Goffstown, New Hampshire. "When I heard the record, I knew I had to come here. I thought about Berklee because it was a lot closer, but when I heard the music from here, I decided on North Texas."

Dan Wojciechowski picked North Texas "because of the One O'clock Lab Band exclusively. I had also taken lessons from Gregg Bissonette when we were both in Michigan, and he told me about the school, too. When I first got here, I spent a lot of time listening to other people to see how they do it. It's a combination of the way they do it and the way you think you should be playing it, plus listening to all the charts from the people that had been in lab bands before you."

Previous drummers at the school include the already-mentioned Ed Soph and Gregg Bissonette. Other alumni have gone on to play with Maynard Ferguson and Woody Herman, each band featuring three different North Texas players at one time or another. "It's like any other business," Ed explains. "The people who go to the Harvard Business School go out and get gigs together, the same way the people who go to North Texas go out and get gigs together. It's generational, too. The people I went to school with—the Lou Marinis and Joe Randazzos, people like that—formed a network. Then you see a new generation of drummers like Gregg Bissonette, who's in a network of people like Dean Parks, Pat Coil, and Steve Houghton. It shows the viability of the program."

North Texas emphasizes a total approach to percussion, an idea Bob Schietroma strongly defends. "These days, you're taking your chances putting all your eggs in one basket. If you talk with a Vinnie Colaiuta or Steve Smith, who went to another famous school, they would say how they never considered playing mallet instruments at that time. Now everyone has mini-studios in their homes, complete with synthe-

sizers. And do you know what skills they are using? They're using the melodic and harmonic skills that they were passing up then. The point is, a lot of people don't want to do this stuff now, but at some time in their lives, they're going to need those other skills."

He continues, "I don't believe you can teach without playing, but, because you are a player, you are not necessarily a teacher. You have to do both, and this place challenges you to do that. I like to work with the students here and I love to play. It's like a system of checks and balances. If I just taught, I would lose touch with the reality of what's happening professionally. I could read about it and watch it, but it's not the same as playing. When students talk to me about studio work, I can tell them how to play over a drum machine or with a click track; I've done it."

Does playing really make one a better teacher? "I'm not sure," responds Randy Drake, "because I've never just taught. I'm always playing and teaching at the same time. I try to tell my students about what to do when you're playing in a rhythm section, what not to do, how to play behind a soloist—things that come from a player's aspect. Technique is important, but so are the musical concepts. I'm sure I could be a better teacher, because there's always room for improvement."

"It would take a whole book to explain my teaching philosophy," chuckles Henry Okstel. "Simply, I would want a student to have the basics of his or her craft together, which would be reading, technique, and coordination, plus a high level of proficiency in all styles. It's important to be well-prepared and well-rounded. Students should also be aware of what is going on in the music business and be able to adapt quickly. They have to be able to play the job and be extremely musical."

"I try to teach them to think for themselves," Ed Soph states. "To play any instrument well or to be involved in any art form—be it drum corps, playing timpani in a symphony, or playing drumset in a jazz band—the best players are those who have the most imagination, who know how to think, and who know how to recognize their own problems and solve them. The tools that we use here, in the way of personal materials and books that are part of the curriculum, are the tools for getting a person to think for himself and to discover things on his own. There's not going to be anybody out there to say that you're rushing or you're dragging or to try this or try that. My main purpose is to get students to think openly and use their imaginations."

The atmosphere at North Texas is conducive to imagination and new ideas. Besides the curriculum and playing opportunities, there is a steady stream of clinicians who perform on the percussion recital every Friday at noon. Almost any major percussion artist performing in (or sometimes even just passing through) the Dallas-Fort Worth area makes his or her

way up to Denton. Recent clinicians include drumset players Tom Brechtlein and Steve Smith, steel drummer Andy Narell, Latin percussionist Frankie Malabe, vibist Jerry Tachoir, marimbist Leigh Howard Stevens, and Phil Faini (who conducted an African workshop). This exposure to all types of percussion is appreciated by students and teachers alike.

The students themselves offer their perspectives on the importance of a well-rounded education: "You don't want to be just a drummer," explains Jeff Falcone. "A drummer is a pretty limited thing; you want to be a well-rounded musician. Every type of percussion genre goes on here. You've got Latin, jazz, rock, fusion, funk, gamelan, orchestral, African; it's all here. Consequently, you're exposed to all that stuff, and you're able to get involved and play." Brad Wagner gives the school credit for his confidence. "I feel like I can walk in and read almost anything, as any graduate of this school can do. Reading is the real emphasis—technique and style being taken for granted, of course—and is a great preparation for any professional situation."

Dan Wojciechowski reflects on his five years at North Texas: "It's a great place. Now I understand why people told me to check it out! We're a little condensed community of incredible musicians who all get together and play. When I've visited other universities, they didn't seem to have this atmosphere. The percussion department challenges you in all areas. But what I like most are the opportunities that are here."

The University of North Texas does indeed offer opportunities to all its students, as well as a thorough background and education in music. In fact, to a lot of musicians all over the world, North Texas is home. With so much competition out in the "real world," it's nice to be prepared and have the confidence that it takes to be the best.

Referring possibly to both the school as well as the drummers themselves, Ed Soph sums it all up by saying, "The best always succeed."

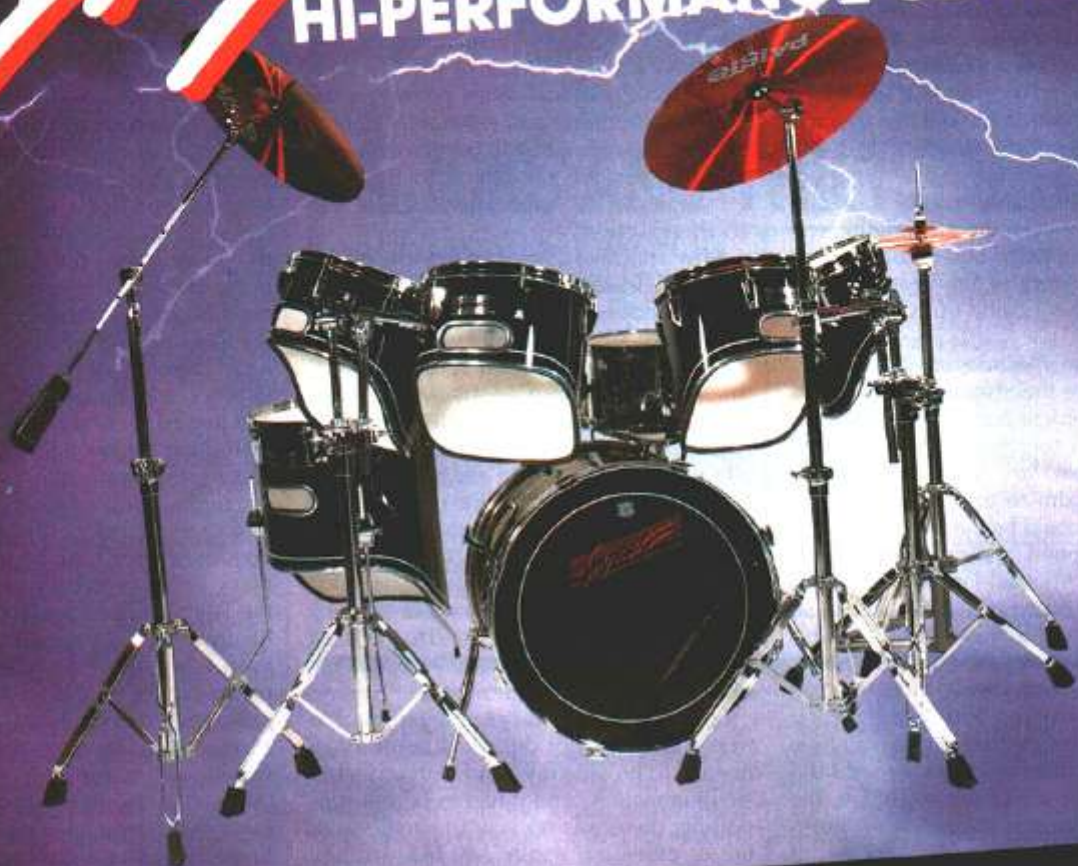


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Out Of The Dark

It's been quite a while since I presented one of my "do-it-yourself" columns with suggestions on how to build something to make your life as a performing drummer a little easier. However, I experienced a situation with my band recently that forced me to take some action in the old home-workshop department. It occurred to me that the problem I was dealing with might not be an isolated one, and that the solution I was working on—along with variations on it—might be helpful to other club players. So here is the story of my problem, and some of the ideas I came up with to solve it.

I've written many times about how important I believe the visual element is to a band's entertainment potential. I've encouraged drummers to employ showmanship, shiny equipment, and any other device possible to maximize their visual appeal. But your band could be the best-costumed, best-choreographed, and most enthusiastic act this side of Michael Jackson; it doesn't make a bit of difference if the audience can't see you. And that is exactly the situation my band was faced with.

We were booked into a club we had never played before, and that was far enough away from my home to prevent my checking it out in advance. However, I did call ahead to ask about the stage size, the position of the stage in the room, the number of outlets available, etc. I also asked if there was any lighting on the stage, and was told that there was.

Well, there were some lights over the stage: ceiling lights—not stage lights. And those were only two of the eight fixtures over the entire stage/dance floor area—all operated on the same dimmer. As a consequence, whatever happened to the dance floor lights also happened to the "stage lights." Now, I'll be the first one to admit that most people prefer a darkened dance floor. It makes things a bit more intimate, and helps people feel a bit less conspicuous. So I agree with turning down the lights over the floor. However, in this particular situation, the management chose to turn them off completely! This put the band—you guessed it—in *total darkness*.

There is a physio/psychological phenomenon known well by theatrical lighting designers and directors. Simply put, it is that people will not pay attention to what they cannot see. (I was a lighting designer for several years, and more than once had a director tell me, "I can't hear the actors. Turn up the lights!") So I was not surprised when the reaction we got from our audience on the first night of this new gig was

something less than enthusiastic. We might as well have been a jukebox.

I very rarely am insulted by the conditions of a club gig; I've been around a long time and have lost most of my illusions. But I didn't spend 25 years perfecting my craft as a drummer and entertainer to play in the dark all night! My background as a lighting designer also came to the fore, demanding that I take some action to rectify this situation!

Now, let's take a moment to evaluate the situation. I estimate that 50% of today's club bands—especially those playing sizeable rock clubs—travel with their own lighting. And most clubs that regularly feature entertainment—especially hotel lounges or other fairly classy rooms—have some sort of stage lighting built in. It's really quite rare to find a situation such as I've described above. On the other hand, if your band plays local taverns, small original-music clubs, and/or the occasional private function in a banquet room or rental hall, you might be faced with the prospect of little or no lighting dedicated to the stage area (if there is a stage at all) surprisingly often. So it pays to be prepared.

I realized that I was not going to be able to produce a major theatrical setup; I just needed to provide my band with some basic illumination. And it had to be self-supporting; there was no way to hang, stand, tie, or otherwise secure any lights to any part of the room itself. I didn't have a lot of time, either, since I needed the lights the next night. So off I went into my workshop, rummaging for materials with which to solve my problem. I knew I needed lights, cables to power them, a way to mount them, and some means of controlling them. I happened to have a couple of small PAR lights (small theatrical lights using common photoflood lamps and no glass lenses) left over from my days on the road. These came with their own "yokes" (U-shaped flat steel bars designed to hold the light either from above or below). All I had to do was figure out how and where to place the lights so that they could shine on my band without "spilling" light all over the rest of the room. I also had to think in terms of safety, because I knew the lights should be up high somewhere, and I didn't want them falling onto anyone.

I figured that the only high, stable surfaces that I could always count on being wherever my band was playing was the top of our P.A. cabinets. We use a pair of medium-sized enclosures that are covered in a thick fibre material somewhat like carpet padding. I decided that if I could place

one light atop each of the cabinets (which are elevated on tripod stands) and shine it down at the band, that would do the job.

In order to secure each light to the top of a P.A. cabinet, I needed to provide it with a stable base of its own. I cut two 12" squares of 3/8" plywood, and drilled a 1/8" hole in the center of each. I countersunk the hole on one side of each base board, so that a flat-head bolt (7/8" x 1 1/4") could fit into the hole with its head flush with the bottom of the board. I then put a light, with the hole in the center of the yoke over the bolt, onto each of the base boards, and used a wing nut to secure the light to the base. Voila—a nice, free-standing lighting instrument, which could be pointed in any direction and angled up or down quite effectively.

But how to affix it to the P.A. cabinet in a secure, but nonpermanent, manner? *Velcro* to the rescue. I glued and stapled several strips of *Velcro* (the male side) to the bottom of each base board. When placed down firmly on the top of the P.A. cabinet, the *Velcro* gripped the fabric covering quite tightly. The light stayed solidly in place, even when the P.A. cabinet was (experimentally) jostled and bumped.

So now I had my lights, but how was I to control them? It wasn't hard to figure that I would need to run one or more extension cords from the lights themselves to whatever control switch I planned to use. I chose to use medium-gauge lamp cord onto which I fitted my own male and female connectors, rather than buying ready-made, heavy-duty extension cords. My homemade cords were more than adequate to carry the 150-watt load to each lamp, yet were still fairly flexible and easy to carry in 20-foot lengths.

For the control switch, I had my choice of a simple off/on switch or a dimmer. I happened to have a pair of standard, household wall switches available, so I used them. I have had experience with household dimmers, and while they are nice from an artistic point of view, they can cause noise in your electrical lines. I simply installed the two switches into an electrical utility (or "quad") box, using a common power line in, and two separate power lines out. In this way, I could control a separate electrical line independently with each switch. (It didn't make much difference with only two lights, but I might want to expand at a later date.) I made sure that each "power line" controlled by one of the switches ended in a multiple female plug.

The end result of all this work is nothing fancy: two floodlights perched on top of our two P.A. boxes and pointed back down at us. They go on or off—no artsy dimming

or changing colors. But they do provide us with our own illumination at a very small cost, and the system can be expanded for greater flexibility in the future.

If you don't have your own lighting instruments to start with, there are several options open to you, depending on your budget and/or how handy you are with tools and electricity. You can, of course, purchase ready-made theatrical lights, yokes and all. A couple of small PAR lights are not terribly expensive, and could be picked up at a theatrical supply outlet, some electrical supply stores, and a few other locations. Check your local *Yellow Pages*. Or, you can pick up some outdoor/patio floodlights in almost any building or home improvement store. Get the type with a base made to be screwed onto the side of a building, and with a ratchet to control the angle at which the lamp points. Some of these come with a clip-on "collar" to help prevent the spread of the light. If you don't get that, you'll need to figure some way of partially enclosing the lamp so that you can contain and direct the light only where you want it to go.

I've had success with creating pseudo-PAR lights by mounting a simple ceramic socket base in the bottom of a two-pound coffee can, and then getting some flat steel bar stock and bending it into a yoke. This takes a few extra bolts, nuts, and washers, and a little visualization, but it isn't particularly difficult. What you need to do here is be creative. It's very possible to build a substantial number of perfectly functional lighting instruments for a fraction of the cost of store-bought theatrical lights. Things you need to keep in mind, however, are insulation (making sure all the electrical components are prevented from coming in contact with external parts that will be handled), heat (making sure that there is space around the lamp for heat to dissipate so that there is no fire hazard), and mounting security (making sure that whatever means you use to place your instrument is safe and solid).

You may find that you need your own lights less than 5% of the time. But as far as I'm concerned, the prospect of performing in the dark is unacceptable, no matter how infrequently it might occur.



BERKLEE continued from page 96

much as we can to the individual students, and then it's up to them to make something of it."

Berklee students are in an excellent position to help each other. There is an incredibly concentrated musical community within the school on which to draw in order to form groups, and a very active musical scene in the Boston area in which those groups can play. So students can use their attendance at Berklee as a springboard from which to gain exposure and experience. In addition, audition notices for spots in name acts or groups do occasionally come in.

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And the faculty can, and does, recommend students for gigs whenever possible. As Dean explains, "The faculty here enjoys a large respect in the music world. As a result, we are constantly asked for recommendations, and we give them. If we can provide our students with an opportunity, we jump on it and help them as much as possible. We get a lot of pleasure out of that. I have former students playing all over the world, from hotels in Atlantic City or Las Vegas to a symphony in Caracas, Venezuela. It's always nice to hear from them about what they're doing. That's one of the biggest rewards we get as teachers.

"As far as getting a music education on a post-high school level goes, I really believe that Berklee is different from any other type of learning center. It's an exciting place to be for students and faculty alike. If it wasn't exciting, I wouldn't be here. My life is music; I'm a performer who also happens to be chairman of the percussion department at Berklee College. The curriculum is developed by a faculty that is young, professional, and actively working in the music world all the time. That faculty ranges from internationally recognized stars to people who play with local pop groups. Our program is alive and active and always changing, just as the music world is. And it's not just playing; that's the major advantage that we have over so many other institutions. So many careers can be attained at Berklee; a student has a chance to

really see what those opportunities are. There's no other place that really has all that."





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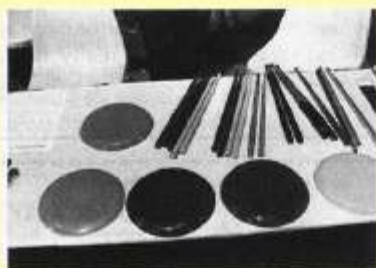
MD-4



AKG—The Micro Mic series was on display.



ALESIS—The HR-16 drum machine.



AMBERSTAR—New practice pads called Slammers, and new sticks called Z-Rods.



AQUARIAN—Roy Burns with the company's new bass drum head, which features a reinforced hole to prevent the head from ripping.



MIKE BALTER—The entire Balter family was on hand to promote Mike's popular sticks and mallets.



BEYERDYNAMIC—The Percussion Mic Group was featured on display.



CALATO—Ed Thigpen stayed busy demonstrating his signature model of brushes.



CAMBER—The Camber III cymbals are made from a heavier brass, and they have a new bell shape and a more hammered look.



CANASONIC—New Power Play heads, co-designed by Steve Gadd.



C-DUCER—The Drum Wizard—it mikes, it mixes, it triggers, and it's MIDI.



CENTER-STAGE—Kashian cymbals and Stage Percussion budget-priced drumsets.



COUNTRY-MAN—The Isomax drum miking system.

NAMM 1988

by Rick Mattingly

were few artist endorsers brought in this year, and there was not as much emphasis on new products. Several leading manufacturers did not have displays at all, includ-

ing Hoshino (Tama), Roland, Paiste, and Korg.

Some people felt, however, that it wasn't the Atlanta location that was a problem,



EVANS—Bob Beals announced that Evans bass drum heads now feature the new CAD/CAM hoops.

D&F—Max-Sticks were on display.



DRUM WORKSHOP—DW's popular drums, hardware, and pedals were on display.



VIC FIRTH—Marc Thomas, Tracy Firth, Kelly Firth, and Vic Firth demonstrating Vic's new line of yo-yos. Firth also introduced Peter Erskine and Alex Acuna model sticks.

DO—The recently released Dave Weckl audio-tape package was featured among DCI's numerous drum videos.



GRETSCH—The Gretsch Blackhawk II drumset was new this year, and a Slingerland kit was on display nearby.



DDRUM—Theddrum2 offers a number of improvements over the original model.



GON BOPS—Congas and timbales were featured.



HEARTWOOD—Patty and Fred Stay with their new line of maple drumsticks.



HAL LEONARD—New books by Bill Bruford and Peter Erskine were featured in the drum book display.

DYNACORD—Sonny Emory was spotted checking out the Dynacord drums.



SUMMER NAMM 1988

but rather the fact that the winter NAMM show in Anaheim seems to be the more important show now. Also, many manufacturers have been complaining about the cost involved in attending two NAMM

shows each year (in addition to the Frankfurt Music Fair, the British Music Fair, etc.), and the need to come up with a new product for each show. More and more, companies are debuting new products only in

Anaheim, and would like to see the summer show eliminated. On the other hand, some manufacturers complain that the Anaheim show is turning into a big "hang," with the L.A. music community turning up



HOLZ—Reinforcement rings for holes cut into drumheads.



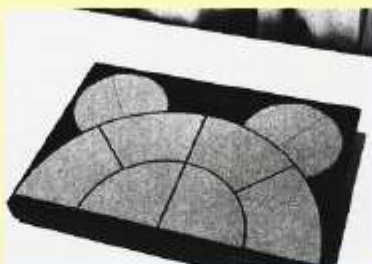
KAMAN—This exhibit featured CB-700 drums, Compo drumheads, Gibraltar hardware, and a Gibraltar free-floating snare drum.



HUMES & BERG—Cases for every size and shape of drum.



IMPACT—A new line of timpani mallets was displayed.



KAT—The DrumKAT MIDI controller was introduced.



DEAN MARKLEY—A wide selection of sticks was displayed for easy access.



ISLAND—IMA budget-priced drumsets.



LANG PERCUSSION—This was Morris tang's first trip to a NAMM show, and he featured his MIDI Vibe.



MAXTONE—Budget-priced drums.



LUDWIG—Elaine Kendall, Jim Catalano, and Bill Ludwig III with Ludwig's new percussion and drumset catalogs.



LP—The Jam Block is a synthetic woodblock that is indestructible—good for loud-volume situations.

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SUMMER NAMM 1988

to see and be seen, but without a lot of real business being conducted.

Finally, some contend that this summer's show merely reflected the current state of the industry, which seems to have gone into somewhat of a holding pattern. Recent years

have seen a flurry of activity in such areas as cymbals, cosmetics, and, of course, electronics. But the dust has settled for the most part, particularly in the area of electronics, which has taken its place alongside acoustic instruments. A few years ago, a certain

electronic drum company from England was vowing to blow acoustic drums off the map, while acoustic companies were contending that electronics were merely a fad. This year, the most telling evidence of peaceful coexistence between the two factions was



MAY EA—An Electro-Voice N-Dym Series 408 has been added to the May-EA line because of its excellent low-end response.



PEARL—A Gregg Bissonette drumset was the centerpiece of the Pearl exhibit, which also featured a full complement of concert and marching percussion.



PURECUSSION—The PureCussion Drums were on display.



MEINL—China cymbals in the Raker line were new at this show.



POLYBEAT—Multicolored synthetic drumsticks.



PAUL REAL—Wuhan cymbals.



MUSICRAFTS—Jupiter budget-priced marching drums.

PREMIER—Rod Morgenstein posed with the huge bucket-loader that was the centerpiece of the Premier exhibit.



REMO—A line of drumsticks, called Mastertouch, has been added, as well as a new piccolo snare drum, and drumsets with new Mastertouch hardware.

MUSICORP—Adam budget-priced drums.



PRO-MARK—A new snare drum kit was featured, which includes a snare drum, stand, practice pad, sticks, and a case.



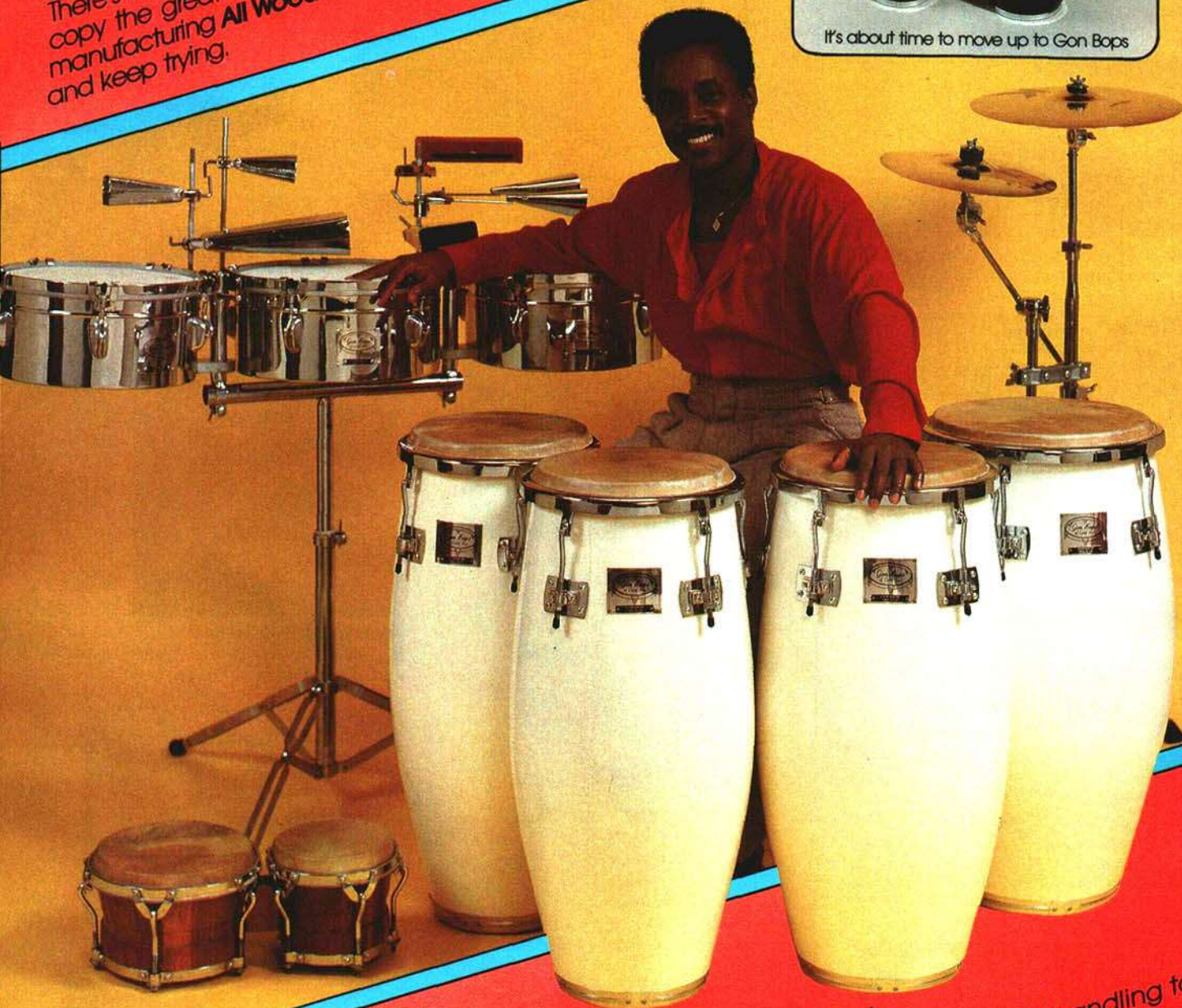
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SUMMER NAMM 1988

the acoustic snare drum in the Simmons booth that was being used to trigger a new Simmons device.

Other than that, there were no particular trends at this show. Dealers we spoke to reported that their biggest selling items at

the moment are cymbals and snare drums, and that a lot of their customers are relieved that there are not amazing new products coming out every six months. Some of the manufacturers we spoke to echoed the same sentiment, and felt that the lack of

activity at this summer's show means that the industry is merely taking a breather and giving everyone, including themselves, a chance to catch up with all of the changes that have occurred over the past few years.



ROGERS—Roy Burns is back with Rogers as a consultant/clinician.



SILVER FOX—Al LeMert with his popular sticks, mallets, and marching items.



SUNLITE INDUSTRIAL CORP.—Thunder budget-priced drums.



SUPERSHINE—Don Milo with Supershine cymbal polish. The company also makes a Super Tambourine.



ROSS—Budget-priced keyboard percussion instruments.



SIMMONS—The Trixxer is a new reinforcement unit for acoustic drums. Simmons also featured the Portakit and the SDX.



TECHTONICS—The Beatmaster triggers feature longer cables for added flexibility with triggering.



SABIAN—Larrie Londin checking out the new HH Classic Ride cymbals, which are available in 20" and 22" sizes.



SLOBEAT—DC-WOO drums are among the items distributed by Slobeat.



TROPICAL—Jugs drumsets and Meinl congas were displayed.

SAVAGE—These sticks are available in Snakeskin and Marble finishes.



SONOR—A new cast bronze piccolo snare drum has been added to the Sonor line. The company also introduced the Protec series hardware, which is made of light-weight aluminum for easier portability.



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VATER—After years of making sticks for other companies, Vater is now making their own line of sticks.



YAMAHA—The Power V drumkit is aimed at the entry-level player with a small budget. The percussion exhibit featured the YV 3400 Vibraphone, which has a touch-sensitive motor control.

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X-L SPECIALTY PERCUSSION—Luke Jacobson with a prototype of the Black Max bass drum pedal.



ZILDJIAN—Lennie DiMuzio with Zildjian's new Piggyback cymbals. The company also introduced a 22" K Custom cymbal.

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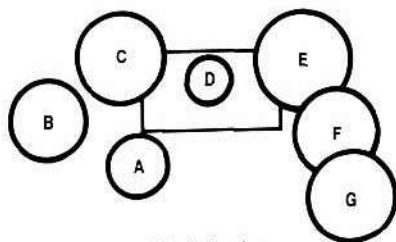
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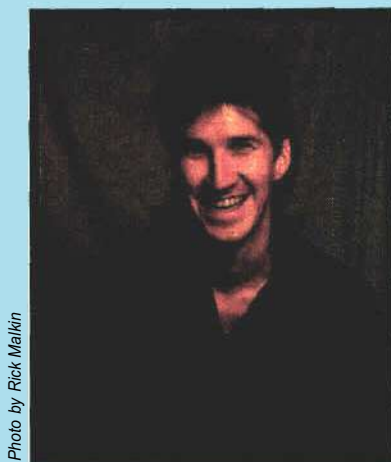


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